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CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

A STUDY IN NEW TESTAMENT MORALITY

BY THE

REV. THOMAS B. KILPATRICK, D.D.

MINISTER OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND AT FERRYHILL, ABERDEEN

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To the

YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN

OF FERRYHILL FREE CHURCH, ABERDEEN,

THESE PAGES,

ORIGINALLY PREPARED FOR THEIR USE,

ARE INSCRIBED

WITH VERY CORDIAL GOOD WISHES

BY THEIR

FRIEND AND PASTOR.

PREFACE

THREE years ago Principal Salmond did me the honour of inviting my assistance in connection with the series of Bible Class Primers, of which he is the editor. For this series, accordingly, I prepared two small volumes, entitled "Christian Character" and "Christian Conduct" respectively. They were intended primarily, in common with the other volumes of the series, to be used in Bible Class work; and it was hoped they would be found helpful by teachers and scholars alike.

Principal Salmond has assured me that this expectation has been in a considerable measure fulfilled; and he has suggested the republication of the primers, in one volume, and in a form more attractive than the primers necessarily assume. Messrs T. & T. Clark have very kindly adopted this suggestion, and the present volume is the result.

I have made no structural change in my treat-

ment of the subject, but I have revised my work with a view to securing greater clearness and simplicity.

I have given to the volume the single title of "Christian Character," and have divided it into two parts, corresponding to the original two primers, in which character is studied (*a*) as in process of formation; (*b*) as in various aspects of its manifestation.

My desire, in venturing on this publication, is to reach a wider circle of readers than that which is concerned mainly with work for Bible Classes. Character is of universal interest, and requires devout and intelligent study on the part of all who would live nobly. In that study, four points seem to me to be of supreme importance:—

1. The Teaching of Jesus. What was His conception of human life? What view did He take of the fields of human activity? What did He teach regarding the source, the rule, and the destiny of human character?

2. The connection between Religion and Morality. What is the value of Jesus for present day experience of the moral life? What is implied in the Imitation of Christ? Is it enough to endeavour to follow "in His Steps"; or is there required beyond

this, as the condition of its possibility, redemption by Christ, and regeneration by the Spirit of God?

3. The Constitution of Human Nature. What is the Good for man? What is the End to which he is directed by the very framework of his being? For, in the words of Scotus Novanticus, "if we desire to be able to speak intelligently of either man or mollusc, we must first know the man or the mollusc, and regard each as an individual organism, having certain innate capacities, aptitudes, and ends, which it seeks to fulfil, and which for it is the Good. Now, the 'good' of a thing is the End of that thing, and the End is the 'good' for it" (*Ethica*, p. 18).

4. The Spheres of human life and action. How is the territory of human life to be mapped out? Are there any departments of action barred to a Christian man? How shall Christian Character unfold itself amid the varied and complex relations of life?

Such points I have dealt with in the following pages, attempting no more than a slight and tentative treatment. I am deeply conscious of the many imperfections of my work. Yet if I have suggested lines of thought which others may more ably

pursue, I shall be satisfied; and, if anything I have said shall be found helpful in quickening conscience, or raising courage, or determining will, on the part of any who may read this book, my deepest desire will be fulfilled.

THOMAS B. KILPATRICK.

ABERDEEN, 11*th May* 1899.

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PART I

THE MAKING OF CHARACTER

THE MAKING OF CHARACTER.

INTRODUCTION.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTER.

CHARACTER is man's true Self, that which he really is. What a man has, rank, possessions, and the like, is clearly distinct from himself. He may *have* many advantages; he may *be* the poorest thing that breathes. Even what a man does is not identical with himself, though it is often all that the world can judge him by. A man may *do* great things which put their stamp on history, and influence the lives of all subsequent generations, and yet *be* himself greater or less than his works. The character makes the man. If that be fair and good, the man is worthy. Character is the highest achievement, the mightiest influence, amid the thousands which enter into the complex life of man. "To get good is animal, to do good is human, to be good is divine. The true use of a man's possessions is to help his work, and the best end of all his work is to show us what he is. The noblest workers of our world bequeath us nothing so great as the image of themselves."[1]

[1] Martineau, Sermon on "Having, Doing, and Being," in *Endeavours after a Christian Life.*

When we approach the study of character, and inform ourselves even generally about it, one fact establishes itself with axiomatic certainty, the Christian character presented in the New Testament is a type absolutely new in the moral history of the race, of unique and commanding excellence. It is a fact, let evolutionists make of it what they will, that there is finality in morals. This is the highest, the absolute, the ideal. The evolution of man is towards a type already manifested. This conviction is not reached by depreciating anything in man's history. We do all justice to the type of Greek or Roman virtue, and we appeal to instances of heroism, which classic history presents as a stimulus to Christians. We do justice to the type of character presented in the Old Testament, and this, to some minds, is even more difficult than fairly to appreciate the classic type. When, however, we have done this, and have entered most fully into the elements of grandeur and beauty presented in Greek sage, Roman soldier or statesman, Hebrew psalmist or prophet, we pass to the New Testament with the distinct conviction that here we have a type congruous indeed with the others, and gathering into itself their excellences, yet supreme in its own loveliness, attracting to itself as they never did the admiration and loyalty of heart and intellect, perpetuated as they never were, nor could have been, in the lives and deaths, not of a select few, but of unnumbered multitudes. Of this New Testament type it has been well said, "A copy of the 'mind of Christ,' it came with new

and unthought-of possibilities of goodness. It was no dream, no speculation, no theory on paper or literary picture. It has proved itself by the continual trial of centuries, and by a thousand tests; by infinitely varied images of mercy, nobleness, self-discipline, self-devotion; by the martyr's fortitude and the missionary's sacrifice, proved itself in many a patient and suffering life, in many a generous enterprise, in many a holy death-bed, in the blessed peace and innocence of countless homes" (Dean Church, *Discipline of the Christian Character*).

Christian character, therefore, declares the mind of God in the creation of man. This is man as God meant him to be. There is no worthier ambition for man than to enter into God's mind regarding him, and to make God's design for him his own resolute endeavour. To become what God would have him be ought to be the passion of man's heart. Any conception of life, even though it be couched in religious phraseology, which falls short of this, is inadequate and misleading. Any representation of Christianity, which makes it possible for a man to imagine that he can be right with God when he is not pressing forward to the realisation of God's aim, is false and harmful. To deny that character is the be-all and end-all of religion is worse than intellectual error. Intellectual error may not touch the springs of spiritual life. Moral stagnation is death.

It behoves young men and women, therefore, in uniting themselves with the Christian Church,

to consider well the career upon which they enter. If all they hope and desire is conformity to a conventional standard of thought and action, sufficient to make them comfortable in the assurance of future happiness, they lose their pains. Whatever they may be nominally, they are not really Christians. To be a Christian is to be committed to a career whose goal is the Christian character (Rom. viii. 29). Unless they set out with the resolution to become what God in His Word declares He designs them to be, they had better not enter at all on the profession of a Christian. To enter on it is a beginning, not a termination. The Christian life, with the Christian character as its glory, cannot be dissected; its elements cannot be analysed. It can only be understood by living it, and it can be lived only by the inspiration of God. There can be no text-book of the Christian life. Yet life ought to be made the subject of reflection and study. Clear thinking will help right acting. Every intelligent and high-minded man sets his life before himself in many an hour of serious thought. The chief aim of the following pages is to help young men and women in such meditations, and to aid them in making more clear to themselves the ideal they have set before them.

CHAPTER I.

THE SOURCE OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

CHRISTIAN character dates from the Person of Christ. It came into the world with Him. It has maintained itself in the world by immediate inspiration from Him. He is the source of its power, and He is the goal of its aspiration.

In claiming this for our Master, we do not find ourselves in any serious opposition to those who profess no adherence to the doctrines of Christianity. The supremacy of Jesus Christ is unquestioned in the sphere of morals. It is our contention, however, that He holds this position, and is, in races and in individuals, the source and energy of all upward movement in morality, because He is what His disciples, within three days of His death, found Him to be, no mere memory, however lovely and pathetic, but a living Person, with whom it was possible to have real fellowship. In studying Christ as the source of Christian character, let us view Him under three aspects, as Moral Teacher, as Example and Standard, and as Redeemer.

(A.) Christ as Moral Teacher.—We hold it to be, indeed, impossible, strictly speaking, to consider Jesus Christ merely as a teacher. In all His moral teaching He is consciously and avowedly speaking, not as a mere enquirer, like Socrates, or a mere commentator, like the scribes and lawyers of His own day, but as King, revealing the constitution of the Kingdom of God, portraying the character of its citizens, and binding His rules upon men as obligations to Himself. Keeping this in view, however, it is practically convenient to look for a little at His teaching by itself. As we rise from the study of that teaching, doubtless our most vivid impression will be that of its astounding novelty. What He Himself said of the Commandment of Love, that it was new (John xiii. 34, 35), we apply to the whole scope of His ethic; it is emphatically a new thing in the earth.

To institute a comparison between it and that of Plato and Aristotle would lead us too far a-field.[1] The teaching of Jesus, however, stands in close and conscious relation to the moral code of the Old Testament. This was the text-book of the religious teachers of His time, and in its morality His contemporaries were trained. He was Him-

[1] A short but most helpful introduction to such a comparative study will be found in "The Christian Ethic," by Professor Knight of St Andrews.

self profoundly conscious of the contrast between His own teaching and that which the people were receiving, a contrast in which was involved the whole transference from the old dispensation to the new. In this contrast we observe three outstanding features:—

1. THE EMPHASIS UPON MOTIVE.—The morality of the Old Testament dealt mainly with outward action, and could, accordingly, be expressed in a code. It is true that there is much more in the Old Testament than this. Its conception of the divine ideal for man is much more than adherence to a scheme of laws. Its insight into sin is far deeper than mere breach of an enactment. Its hope of salvation is far higher than mere escape from consequences of breach of law. At the same time, that, which should be more than law, in which grace and truth should be revealed, was still for the Old Testament an expectation of the time to come. Its immediate demands can only be expressed in legal form. It confronts conscience with a code. The scribes were not in error in regarding the morality of the inspired books confided to their keeping as a system of legislation. But they were profoundly in error in not perceiving that the keeping of enactments cannot constitute a real righteousness, and may even be made a cover for deep inward impurity. By this error the teaching of the Scribes was entirely vitiated. They

preached a false standard, laid upon conscience an intolerable burden, and had no remedy whatever for inevitable failure. By this error also their lives were deeply tainted, so that the records of their time present absolute justification for the sternest woes pronounced by Jesus (Matt. xxiii. 13-36).

Jesus in His teaching penetrates beneath the outward action, and lays absolute emphasis on motive. He is concerned, not with an outward conformity to law, which may be complete and yet grossly insincere, and which, even if sincere, cannot, in its very nature, constitute the perfection of character, but with the inner springs of action, the state of the heart, the attitude of the mind to God and duty. These cannot be reached by law, and till they are reached law in the highest sense cannot be kept. This is the standpoint from which He criticises the morality of the Scribes and Pharisees (Matt. v. 20). In the course of the Sermon on the Mount He speaks of the Old Testament legislation regarding murder, adultery, oaths, retaliation, and love of our neighbour. He points out its limitations and its incapacity to produce real righteousness, while at the same time He indicates the Kingdom type of character in respect to these matters. Passages abound in which the same emphasis on motive is laid. Specially noteworthy is Matt. xv. 16-20. So

thoroughly blinded were the disciples by the conventional morality of the day that they could not understand what really defiled a man. *Cf.* also Matt. vii. 21 ; xviii. 35.

Being thus inward and spiritual, the morality which Christ taught cannot be forced into a code. It is true we might conceivably write down a list of injunctions, precepts, and rules compiled from the words of Jesus, but they would in no sense constitute His moral teaching. We could not exhaust it in ten thousand commandments. Jesus did not even attempt, as Greek moralists from their intellectual attitude necessarily did, to draw up a list of virtues embodying the type of character He desired to prevail. His style of teaching is informal, occasional, and often paradoxical. We gather His meaning chiefly from instances and illustrations, not because His ethic is shallow or fragmentary, but because it touches the depths of man's spirit, and comprehends the whole of his manifold experience.

2. THE POSITIVE NATURE OF THE PRECEPTS. —It follows from the character of Old Testament morality as a legislation, that its precepts are largely negative in form. Its characteristic expression is, "Thou shalt not." In truth, legislation necessarily concerns itself with restraining rather than stimulating and guiding action. This is by no means to cast a slight on the function

of restraint, as a most useful moral discipline. It is true — as opponents of Total Abstinence never fail to remind us—that we cannot make a man sober by act of Parliament. But we can, by act of Parliament, lay such restraints upon his actions, as shall prevent him doing injury to himself or others, and we do, therefore, open up possibilities of real moral advancement. At the same time, this function of restraint, even when supported by all manner of deterrents in the shape of threatened penalties, is necessarily very limited in the sphere of its influence, and can never amount to a renewal or reformation of character. For this there is wanted a regenerative touch laid on heart and will, the springs of action and source of character. This is what Christ proposes to do. He seeks to capture the inner citadel of man's nature, to bring the man himself into harmony with the highest good, so that all his actions shall emanate from the constraint of an accepted principle of life. *Constraint*, not *restraint*, is the keynote of New Testament morality. Christ's characteristic phrase is "Thou shalt," rather than "Thou shalt not"; and "Follow me," rather than "Thou shalt."

The originality of the brief compendium of duty known as the Golden Rule lies in the change from negative to positive form. According to a well-known story, an inquirer demanded of Shammai to

be taught the law while he stood on one foot. Shammai drove him away with indignation. The inquirer then made the same request of Hillel, and he, with greater insight, at once replied, "Whatsoever thou wouldest that men should not do to thee, that do not thou to them. All our law is summed up in this saying." Similarly a saying of Confucius is reported, "True reciprocity consists in not doing to others what you would not want done to yourself." The form of our Lord's injunction—"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them"—carries with it much more than a verbal change. It transfers the secret of character from the outskirts to the centre, and implies an inner determination of will towards the fulfilment of the highest good. The author of "Ecce Homo" brings out the special feature of Christian ethic thus: "To the duty of not doing harm, which may be called justice, was added the duty of doing good, which may properly receive the distinctively Christian name of Charity."

The same general conception of morality is conveyed in Christ's dealing with the Young Ruler (Luke xviii. 18-23). The young man claimed to have kept the law, and no doubt he had kept it barely as law. The one thing he lacked was the inward surrender of heart, which should not limit itself to restraints or wait on an outward voice, but should be an abiding and positive constraint.

This the Master demanded and this, with quick apprehension of the comprehensive nature of the demand, far exceeding the most elaborate code, the young man sorrowfully refused.

The same idea appears in the parable of the talents, in the boundless indignation of the Master toward the slothful servant (Matt. xxv. 26-30). In the kingdom of heaven there are no specified limits, by simply keeping within which a man may keep clear of condemnation. The Kingdom itself is within us "as a great yearning," to use George Eliot's phrase, or rather as an irresistible spring of eager energy. This man, who hid his lord's money, displayed by his mere inactivity the absence of this inner spring, and thus revealed his real disloyalty.

Of this feature of His moral teaching, the Master is Himself the best illustration. He "went about," not merely keeping clear of evil, but "doing good."

3. THE UNIVERSAL SCOPE.—This aspect is an inference, rather than an actual definition of the Master's. Old Testament morality was, in the nature of the case, for Jews. It is true that where the evangelic interest becomes conscious, as *e.g.*, pre-eminently in the second part of Isaiah, there is also the presence of universalism. Even so, however, Jerusalem is centre of the new economy, and the type of life is distinctively Jewish (Is. xliv.

5 ; xlix. 22, 23 ; lv. 5 ; lx. 3-10 ; lxvi. 19-21). In our Lord's own day, the morality of the Pharisees had made systematic what had been the necessary limitation of the prophetic vision ; and had drawn the hardest line of demarcation between Jew and Gentile, and even between Jew and Samaritan. Across this line duty scarcely existed, and love could not flow. A morality which rose above legalism, and found its domain not in enactments but in motives, could not tolerate such limits. Our Lord's moral teaching does not retain even the Jewish cast, which the prophetic teaching could not avoid, and it tacitly denies all such racial limitations as the Pharisaic code maintained. The question was once definitely brought before him in the Lawyer's question, "Who is my neighbour?" The whole spirit of legalism breathes in the question. The very breath of the new ethic is felt in the answer, couched, as it was, in that parabolic form, which our Lord was wont to adopt, in dealing with the unintelligent, or the unsympathetic. The figure of the good Samaritan proclaims, once for all, the universality of New Testament morality. It opens the possibility of the highest life to men of all races, and of every form of civilisation, and summons them to pursue it. Herein lies the suitability of Christianity as a universal religion. It does not destroy nationality, nor lead an attack on outward forms, where

these do not subvert fundamental conditions of moral life. It offers itself to Hindus or Chinese as the ideal life for them. This has proved one of the preparatives of the heathen world for the reception of Christianity. "I am not a Christian," said the Prince of Travancore in 1874, "but I accept Christian ethics in their entirety."

But Christian ethic leads to Christ as Saviour. If, then, the teaching of Jesus could mean so much to one who was not a Christian, how much more ought it to be to those who see in Jesus much more than a Teacher? If He be our Teacher, our Christian life is nothing less than discipleship, and it becomes a first charge upon our time and strength to acquaint ourselves with His teaching, to be diligent students of His express words, to seek to catch the spirit which breathes through His special sayings, to open our whole being to the impression of His mind, the control of His will. It is the specific quality of this teaching that it can never be known till it is practised. The test of acquaintance with it and possession of it lies in action and conduct, as these register our moral assimilation to the truths for which we profess admiration; only thus, as He told His disciples, do we escape the doom of unimproved knowledge (John xiii. 17).

(B.) Christ as Standard: His Example.—As a moral teacher, Christ takes rank with other moral

teachers who have left their stamp on the morality of the races to which they belonged. His superiority in this aspect is evinced by the fact that His teaching has been accepted as the rule of life by races widely different from that to which He Himself belonged, and has proved itself to be adapted to the requirements of mankind in general. When we enquire into the causes of this, we are led beyond the contents of the teaching itself, and are compelled to seek them in the Person of the Teacher. Had the teaching survived in book form, without any personality to irradiate it and give it life, it is questionable if it would have held a larger place in the minds of men to-day than that of Confucius. It is the Person of Christ which gives power to His teaching.

When we consider further the connection between the Person and the Teaching, we find that the one is the embodiment, manifestation, and realisation of the other. Had the relation of Jesus to His teaching been that of Socrates to his, His words, like those of Socrates, would have had many beautiful and pathetic associations derived from His manner of living and dying, and would have been influential in the lives of His disciples, in the same sense and degree as those of Socrates were. The special power and world-wide influence of the teaching

of Jesus, we therefore conclude, are due to the fact that He was, in a sense to which Socrates never attained, the example of His own words. The morality which Jesus taught, He lived. It is not a literary memorial, but a fact of the moral sphere, unique and commanding. The example of Jesus, therefore, verifies his moral teaching, and sets it forth as the ideal of human excellence. To trace the example of Jesus in its manifold application to daily life is a task of inexhaustible interest, but it belongs to special departments of biblical study. Here we can only point out such general aspects of Christ's example as bear upon the Christian life as a whole.

1. ITS VALIDITY.—It is possible to present the example of Christ in such a form as to deprive it of its value as an instance for our profitable study. If Christ's moral perfection be treated as a mere inference from His divinity, an air of unreality is cast over it. It ceases to have practical value for human beings. Similarly, if we assert that Christ was not divine, and therefore could not be perfect, we are approaching the subject with a pre-supposition quite as abstract, and quite as destructive of its real interest and meaning. The view given in the narratives of Christ's life, and in the New Testament generally, is that Christ was really human, and possessed a true and perfect human goodness. His example

is the instance of a human life, to be studied by those who have the same life to live, and grasped as the ideal for them. No doubt the conditions under which Christ lived His human life differ in several important respects from those to which we are subject. But it is to be clearly observed that the conditions in His case were not easier, the struggle involved not slighter. Magnify the difference between Him and us to the dimensions assigned in Scripture, we still find in Christ a case of a truly moral development, and are prohibited from offering as excuse for our not attaining to His likeness the contention that He was not genuinely a man. The temptation in the wilderness, let critics make of its form what they will, remains a human experience, differing from what we know of temptation only in the terror of the attack and the splendour of the victory. From the record of that incident we know that it was not solitary in the experience of the Son of Man. Again, and yet again, in His life He met that onslaught, and knew the pressure of that temptation; and thus from the story of His human experience we justify the expressions of Heb. ii. 17; iv. 15; v. 7; and rejoice to know that the victorious Christ belongs to the domain of human warfare and human possibilities.

2. ITS PERFECTION.—We frankly admit that this is essential to Christian ethic no less than to

Christian theology. If, as we contend, the morality of Christ be absolute and universal, the example of Christ must be perfect. Prove it to be imperfect, and at once it becomes conceivable that a better man might be the revealer of a higher morality. The burden of proof here lies plainly with those who impugn the absolute goodness of Christ, and on this point we rest satisfied. The world has not lacked those who had the will to prove Him at fault, and if they have failed, as they conspicuously have failed, to make out their case, we may confidently draw the inference that the thing they tried to do is impossible. The character of Christ, His critics being judges, remains untouched. We go even further, and maintain that insight into the character of Christ, as into every other aspect of His personality, is not within the reach of merely logical processes, and can be attained only in that Christian experience which consists in direct fellowship with Himself. At the same time there are lines of thought which, if they do not amount to verification, suggest an inference of overwhelming force.

(*a*) *The Incidents of His Life.*—It has been contended that we have only a small selection of the words and deeds of Christ, and that we have not before us the material for a correct estimate of His character. It has even been suggested that we have as much evidence for the sinlessness of

such a man as the Apostle James as for that of Christ.

If mere enumeration of sayings and acts were all that is required for the estimate of character, we might admit the forcibleness of this reasoning. We do not know all that Jesus said and did. We do not need to know all. We study what has been given to us. We perceive in all we know of Him the unity of a personal life, the vital presence of a character harmonious with itself in all its manifestations. We know this Man. If, therefore, we find in His whole behaviour full correspondence with the will of God, if every attempt to show a discord between His will and the highest goodness and truth has utterly failed, the conviction masters our judgment that He was not as other men, subject to passion, the slave of self-will, that in Him the highest ideal found complete, unhindered realisation. We rise from the contemplation of His character with an awe upon our souls as of those who have seen the Highest. Even coarse natures like that of Napoleon have felt the thrill of it, if he is accurately reported in the saying attributed to him—"I know men. This is no mere man." This impression is deepened when we learn that it is precisely that which the personality of Jesus made even upon those who were not such as could conceivably have been influenced by prejudice in His favour. This convic-

tion throbs with intolerable pain through the heart of the traitor as the consequences of his deed break upon his intelligence. This conviction, deepening through every stage of the trial, pierces to the quick the soul of Pilate, case-hardened as he was with cynical selfishness. This conviction, seized and cherished in the last hours of agony, gave the malefactor crucified with Him courage to offer the prayer that opened for him the gate of paradise. Add to this the testimony of those who lived in daily intimacy with Him, who, when He was with them, gave to Him a worship impossible had His character not stood the test of such close scrutiny, and who, when He was withdrawn from their bodily vision, lived to proclaim a message of which His absolute moral perfection was an essential element (Acts ii. 22 ; 1 Peter ii. 22 ; 2 Cor. v. 21 ; Heb. vii. 26). Proof in a technical sense we may not have. Yet the conclusion we come to is one, the converse of which makes all evidence unreliable, and confounds all our estimates of men.

(*b.*) *His own Consciousness.*—Holy men are the first to confess their personal unworthiness. If those whom we have supposed to be holy decline or omit the confession of sin, we at once question their sanctity, and frequently have our suspicions certified by the moral falls which haunt spiritual vain-gloriousness as a Nemesis. But Christ never confessed sin. The most touching part of spiritual

biographies is to be found in the record of conflict with evil habit, the expressions of sorrow for defilement, and aspiration after higher holiness. Such record and such phrases have no place in the life of Christ. We do, indeed, read of the trouble of His soul; we are admitted to the spectacle of His agony; but, in all the anguish, there is not a hint that His own sin added one drop of bitterness to the cup He drank. Far otherwise, we read His own implicit claim to sinlessness (John viii. 46). More significant still are His assertions of absolute spiritual harmony between Him and God, a harmony which the smallest moral difference, the faintest divergence of will, would have utterly destroyed (Matt. xi. 27; John xiv. 7-11). If He were not morally perfect, such claims are worse than baseless. In making them He was either so morally blind as not to know when He was coming short of the highest standard, or so radically false that He deliberately said those things with intention to deceive. In either case His character not merely fails of perfection, but falls far short of the height to which many common men have attained. Either alternative is at once intolerable and absurd. A far more rational view is to see in these claims of Christ, advanced as they were so simply, without parade or self-assertion, the utterance of His consciousness of the fact that there did exist such relationship to the Father as these records imply.

Grant that the relationship existed, it could not fail to express itself, and to find for itself just such expressions as these. The very claim, therefore, which in the case of a sinful man would have laid him open to severest condemnation, becomes in Christ an evidence conclusive of His sinlessness.[1]

3. ITS AUTHORITY.—To say that Christ's example presents us with the type of absolute moral perfection is to say that it is at the same time authoritative in the sphere of action. Without anticipating what will have to be said later on as to the nature of conscience, it is enough to point out here that man as a personal being has the faculty of recognising ideal excellence whenever it is presented to him, and is therefore under obligation to seek that excellence as soon as recognised. Law is to all men, what it was to Israel, at one stage of their discipline, the form in which the good is revealed to conscience. But law contains in itself confession of its own failure to accomplish the moral perfecting of man, and points beyond itself,—is, as Paul says, our tutor *to bring us unto Christ* (Gal. iii. 24). Christ as perfect example fulfils the law (Matt. v. 17). What confronts us is no longer a code, but a Person, the standard and rule of moral life. His teaching

[1] "The Christ of History and of Experience," by D. W. Forrest, contains in its opening chapters a full and enlightening treatment of this subject.

carries conviction of its truth, because it is part of Himself, and is illustrated and verified by all He said and did. His life becomes itself teaching, or, more properly, legislation. Thus the author of "Ecce Homo" finely says: "The law which Christ gave was not only illustrated, but infinitely enlarged by His deeds. For every deed was itself a precedent to be followed, and therefore to discuss the legislation of Christ is to discuss His character; for it may be justly said that Christ Himself is the Christian Law."

The supremacy of Christ in the domain of morals is admitted even by those who yield to Him no higher function than that of Example. The often-quoted words of J. S. Mill may be here repeated: "Whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left, a unique Figure, not more unlike all His predecessors than all His followers. . . . Religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in selecting this Man as the ideal Representative, and Guide of Humanity; nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life." And if we assign to Him a higher function, are bound to Him by closer ties, and look to Him for more than guidance, the obligation of accepting His authority is only the deeper and

more imperative. The Christian life can be nothing less than the Imitation of Christ. As such He Himself conceives it (John xiii. 15), and as such, the Christian conscience acknowledges it to be (1 John ii. 6), and this Christian men have in all ages sought to make it (1 Cor. xi. 1; Heb. vi. 12).

It is altogether misleading to represent the Imitation of Christ as a kind of "counsel of perfection" not meant to be seriously taken by common Christians. It is an imperative obligation laid on all who accept Him as the Standard; His being more than a Standard giving to the obligation a more strenuous moral power. The young especially ought to understand that in accepting Christ, and joining His Church, they are committing themselves to nothing less than this ceaseless imitation.

(C.) Christ as Redeemer.—So far, then, we have reached these results—Christ as Moral Teacher, has revealed the ideal life for man; Christ, as Example, has in His own person realised it. It is plain, however, that if this were all, the advantage of His presence in the earth would be, as far as the vast majority of our race is concerned, but small indeed. Of what avail would it be that one Individual has realised the ideal, if unnumbered millions necessarily for ever come short of it? The view of His perfection would only add to the misery of which we are conscious in coming short. We

may even say that the presence of a sinful being would be more helpful to us in our efforts after virtue. If Christ be perfect, and if He be no more than a Perfect Pattern, He will be merely a perpetual condemnation of our imperfection, a ceaseless mockery of our helplessness. How, moreover, on such a supposition, are we to construe His character? If He were conscious, on the one hand, of His own sinlessness, and on the other of His inability to lift men out of their sins, He must have been, He ought to have been, the most utterly wretched Being who ever stood on the surface of this sin-cursed world. If He were not, there must have been something amiss with His perfection, something that came short of perfect moral goodness. If He is not more than Example, He is not even that.

In point of fact, it is impossible to do justice to the study of His character, presented in the four Gospels, without seeing that He is more than Example, that He is, what the New Testament declares Him to have been, what our human need demands, Redeemer also. We are not here concerned with systematic theology, but we cannot consider the Christian character without pausing to note at least the outlines of the great deed which is the ground of its possibility.

1. THE NEED OF MAN.—One word sums up the need of man—sin. He has other necessities.

The State and the Church cannot afford to neglect them. But beneath the evils of political bondage, of physical surroundings, of intellectual ignorance, lies, as their root and spring, the evil of sin. More imperative than the need of enfranchisement or social reform or education is the need of redemption. Not till sin has been dealt with, and put out of the way, can any upward movement for the individual or for society be possible.

(*a.*) *The Nature of Sin.*—Sin is traced in Scripture to the deed of man's will opposing itself to the will of God. Read the story of the Creation and the Fall as an account of the moral constitution of the race, and we learn two things—that God meant man, as an independent personality, to live in harmony with Himself, in all the joy and virtue which that fellowship would secure; and that man, in the exercise of that freedom which was an essential element of his constitution as a person, declined this harmony, and broke away into the false liberty of alienation from God. It is of first importance in the study of character to fix attention on the nature of sin as an act of will. Many circumstances tend to obscure this fundamental fact. Many interests combine to stigmatise this view as harsh, intolerant, and unsympathetic. In reality, the only hope for man's redemption lies in the fact that sin is his, his own deed, for which he is responsible.

It may seem a milder view to say that he is not responsible, that heredity and environment have made him what he is. But it is to be observed that, in denying to him responsibility, there is denied to him personality. He is rescued from blame, at the cost of his dignity as a man. This view of man as not responsible, while it has found fresh support in modern science, is as old at least as the time of Ezekiel. He, too, was confronted with the doctrine, urged partly in despair and partly in excuse of sin, that a man's sin is no more than the consequence of his forefathers' actions. Against it he sets like a rock the fact of individual responsibility. This is the basis of divine judgment. God in judging a man will not take into consideration anything else than the fact of *his* sin. "The soul that sinneth, *it* shall die." (*See* Ezekiel xviii. 4, and the whole chapter.) Similarly, James is troubled with the sophisticated piety of those who argue —God does everything; consequently, when I sin, it is God who has led me to it. He replies, first, by a solemn assertion of the holiness of God (i. 13), then by an analysis of the act of sin (vers. 14, 15). It begins in desire; desire awakens will, and so sin is born. The act may not yet have been perpetrated, but when the will has determined, there is the conception of sin. Man rising in the might of will to assert himself against God, that is sin.

(*b.*) *The Forms of Sin.*—From this view of sin, as the revolt of self against God, it follows that it is impossible to catalogue, or even in any satisfactory way to classify the sins men may commit. Just as no code can prescribe all moral duties, so no code could be devised to particularise and forbid all forms of evil. The question so often asked, "Is it wrong to do so and so?" cannot be answered by reference to a rule. Sin is the claim of Self to rule in opposition to God, and the instances in which this may occur defy classification. Nowhere in the New Testament is the attempt made. The most complete list is that which occurs in Gal. v. 19-21, in which there are four classes—(1) sensual passions; (2) unlawful dealings in things spiritual; (3) violations of brotherly love; (4) intemperate excesses. (*See* Lightfoot *in loc.*) But this list, while wonderfully wide in range, is determined by its reference to the peculiar circumstances, and possibly to the special temperament of those to whom the epistle is addressed. Perhaps the most complete classification is that which considers man as standing in relation to God, to his own animal nature, and to the world. Hence arise—(1) Pride, man claiming a false superiority; (2) Sensuality, man sinking beneath his true dignity; (3) Covetousness, man seeking a false satisfaction. These forms appear in Dante's great poem. Pride, as a hungry lion;

Sensuality, as a spotted panther; Covetousness, as a famished wolf. It is at once truer, and more practically important, to observe that sin, being, what it is, opposition of will to God, has endless ramifications, appears in a thousand forms, and assumes the most bewildering transformations. Hence the Scriptures lay great stress on the "deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. iii. 13; 2 Thess. ii. 10; Eph. iv. 22; Jer. xvii. 9). Any one of these forms leads us back to the fountainhead of evil, and raises the whole problem of deliverance.

(*c*) *The Consequences of Sin.*—If sin be understood thus as a breach of a personal fellowship between man created in God's image and God, for whose glory he is created, and in whom he finds the completeness of his own being, we see at once the gravest quality of sin; it sets man forth guilty in God's sight.

Behind the special laws we may have broken, behind even the persons we have injured, is God, against whom we have sinned, whose will we have defied, whose Love we have outraged (Ps. li. 4). With guilt comes condemnation. As sinners, in virtue of our revolt from God, we stand "condemned already." The judgment of a Holy and Loving God has come unto all men to condemnation. God must be less than Holy, less than Loving, if He has for sin less than condemnation. At the same time, while condemnation comes

upon sinners in name of God, it comes in strict accord with the nature of sin itself. It is not something foreign added to sin, but is the development and expression of what sin in its own nature is. God drove out the man (Gen. iii. 24). But sin in itself is separation from God. There is native and necessary incongruity between sin and God's presence and fellowship. No language could do justice to the terror of this thought, and the language of Scripture is studiously calm as befits the unimaginable awfulness of the theme; *see* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Gal. v. 21; Rev. xxi. 27. This, then, is the position of the sinner. He has alienated himself from God. He stands guilty, condemned, in God's sight. It is idle to speak to such a being of reformation, of imitating the example of Christ, and following His teachings. The man must be reached ere his character be improved. But the man is a sinner, alienated from God. He must be reconciled to God before character in any genuine sense can be formed in him. Christian character requires redemption as the ground of its possibility.

2. THE WORK OF CHRIST.—Here also we are in the domain of theology proper. We may have little to do with theories of the atonement. We have, however, everything to do with a Deed and its Significance for us. Between man and a new life for him lies Sin. The deed which alone meets

the case is sin-bearing. That One, who was God, should bear the sin of man is required by the circumstances of the case. Nothing else can be a perfect propitiation, nothing else can make atonement, bring back the harmony of God and man in which alone lies hope for sinners; and nothing less than this is a fair construction to be put on the words of Christ regarding His death, or the words of His followers as they strove to express the infinite meanings of the Death they at first so piteously misunderstood. Passages are too numerous even to refer to; but see especially the words of institution at the last Supper, together with Matt. xx. 28; Rom. iv. 25; v. 6-11; 2 Cor. v. 18-21; Ephes. ii. 12-17; Heb. ix. 28; 1 Peter ii. 24, 25.

It is the task of theology to gather together the various lights thrown by these and other passages of Scripture into the depths of the mystery of love; to set the truth, thus established, in relation to morality, exhibiting its harmony with every aspect of God's character, and to reason, showing how it harmonises with, while at the same time it transcends, the highest intellectual powers which God has implanted in man; and to vindicate for it its place as the heart and centre of the Gospel message. The moral fact established by the atoning death of Christ is the reconciliation of God and man, the undoing of the consequences of Sin, the bringing together of God and man into that harmony

of will which was God's design in creation. In one word, the death of Christ is the foundation of the Kingdom of God. Men, alienated by sin, are now gathered under the sovereign sway of God to begin the career so fearfully interrupted by their transgression. The moral world is not a scene of mere tumult and despair, in which men plunge ever deeper into transgression, seeking and never finding satisfaction. There has been constituted in the death of the Redeemer, that kingdom, of which the ancient community of Israel, itself founded in a redemptive act, was a shadow and prophecy, whose near coming was the burden of the Baptist's message, whose nature was the theme of so much of Jesus' teaching.

It is, fundamentally, a new relationship between God and man, according to which they are organically one in full moral accord and deep vital union; and this involves also a new relationship between man and man, in which they are in the fullest sense members of one organism, and, therefore, of one another.

In times of doubt and fear, when evil seems victorious, fresh hope arises when we realise that the moral goal of the race is not a dream, which might be disappointed, but a fact already established, in the might of which we labour, having as our goal its full realisation. The Kingdom has come. There exists that moral organism which

has been defined by Dr Candlish as "the gathering together of men under God's eternal law of righteous love, by the vital power of His redeeming love in Jesus Christ, brought to bear upon them through the Holy Spirit" (Cunningham Lecture on "The Kingdom of God," p. 197). Moral life for man begins when he becomes through faith in Christ a member of this organism, a citizen and heir of the Kingdom.

3. RESULTANT FEATURES OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.—From the point of view of that work of Christ, which was finished in dying, and issued in the Kingdom, we discern three great characteristic features of Christian character. (*a.*) The basis of its possibility. Guilt makes union to God impossible; without that union life and life's product, character, are impossible. Guilt is atoned for. Christ, our substitute, has borne that load. It no longer stands between us and God, condemning us to isolation, affecting us with moral paralysis. We believe in the forgiveness of sins, and from that moment hope arises. Christ is the conscience of the race. To this truth, which of itself has in it more of despair than promise, we add that He is its hope. His goodness does not condemn, because since He has borne our sins, there is now for us no condemnation; and His goodness is not beyond us, as a new and more terrible revelation of our evil, but within us, at once our deepest

aspiration, and the inspiration and energy of our moral regeneration. (*b.*) Its ruling principle. Trace Christian character to its source, and we find it roots itself in the deed of Christ for our redemption. Realise how it comes to pass that we are not now aliens, but included in the Kingdom, with the goal of Christ-likeness shining before us, and we find it is because Christ, in unspeakable love for us, identified Himself with us, and endured the uttermost of sin's penalty, instead of us. Reduce our moral condition to its simplest terms, and we find we cannot put it more accurately or comprehensively than in these words, "bought with a price," with their strict correlative, "ye are not your own." Our whole redeemed life lies in deep subjection to the claim of Christ. Christian character accordingly gains unity and simplicity, strength and certainty, through this dominant principle of recognition of Christ's Sovereignty. We have but one thing to do, viz., to vindicate Christ's Sovereignty throughout the whole domain of our nature and constitution, and in every department of life. The character God meant us to have was destroyed by the revolt of Self. Christian character is reconstituted by the surrender of Self, and the sanctifying of Christ as Lord in heart and life (1 Peter iii. 15; R.V.). (*c.*) Its inspiring motive. Christian character is produced by a deed of love.

Its deepest consciousness, its ceaseless inspiration, is, therefore, answering love (1 John iv. 10). Through the uprising of this wellspring of action Christian character gains ease, swiftness, and gladness. A character modelled on Law is painful, laborious, slow. Christian character acts with the precision and freedom of an instinct. "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." Love works by a sweet inevitableness. It is "dutiful in thought and deed," and love, says Browning, is "energy of life." Christian character is the harmony of God's universe, and its keynote is this, "He loved me and gave Himself for me." Love in man evoked by and answering to Love in God is the inspiration of life for man. Against it there is no law.

CHAPTER II.

THE DISCIPLINE OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

WE have attained, therefore, this result that Christ is the source of Christian character. Its specific nature is derived from Him; and its existence as a reality of moral experience stands in Him. We have now to observe that, by necessary consequence, Christian character can manifest itself in any individual human being only through personal relation to Christ. In making this statement, we ought to be careful lest we unduly narrow the scope of God's grace. We ought to admit that there may be a relation to Christ, which is, so to speak, subconscious, and may exist even in those who have never been brought into connection with the Christ of history, so that in them aspects of distinctively Christian character may be found, though they are ignorant of distinctively Christian doctrine. Yet such cases, whether many or few, cannot be made the subject of scientific investigation, and form no real exception to the statement made above.

It is common for young men and women to be

greatly attracted to persons, who although not Christians, yet possess qualities of mind or heart greatly superior to those of other persons who profess to be Christians. Hence the inference is often carelessly drawn that it does not matter whether there be any personal relation to Christ, that character is enough, and that character may exist apart from Him. The answer lies, first, in directing attention to those general considerations we have already adduced, proving that Christian character, as a distinct type, can exist only as it is rooted in Christ; second, in pointing out that judgment upon individual instances is always precarious. The unbeliever may not be after all so admirable; the professed believer may not be so unworthy. Only prolonged observation will show. Meantime, it may be prophesied that what is excellent in the unbeliever will ultimately lead him to Christ; and that what is unworthy in the Christian will be gradually purged out of him. If the unbeliever remain impervious to the influence of Christ, it will shew that he is not admirable in the highest sense. If the Christian do not morally improve, it will show that his profession has been vain. Practically, therefore, the assertion remains universally true that personal relation to Christ is necessary for the development in the individual of that highest type of moral excellence, the Christian character. It is plain that this sets

the claim of Christ in a high and lovely light. To those who have worthy ambitions, who desire to live nobly, it may be said, "Only as you accept Christ as Teacher, Ideal, and Redeemer, will your ambition be satisfied, and your life be great and good."

It belongs to Christian doctrine rather than to Christian ethics to study the experience by which the human spirit becomes knit to Christ. Yet we cannot wholly pass it by, though we can only notice its leading features.

1. THE POWER.—The doctrine of man's total inability through the Fall is often so stated as to be repellent, even misleading. There can be no doubt, however, that it represents ethical fact. Sin is the determination of the will, that is, of the man, by Self in opposition to the will of God. It belongs, therefore, to the nature of the case that a power other than that of Self is wanted to "persuade and enable" the man to turn and yield to God. Only God can operate effectively on the spirit of man; and this He does by His own Holy Spirit (John i. 12; Tit. iii. 5). At the moral crises of life only two persons exist, God and the Man. It is unspeakably solemn, and no stranger dare intermeddle. It behoves even persons officially concerned, as pastors, or those profoundly interested through human affection, as parents, to recognise that the only power

which can operate is that of the Holy Spirit, and to be on their guard accordingly lest they hinder where they meant to help.

2. THE METHOD.—Probably no wiser statement of the Spirit's dealing with a soul has ever been penned than the answer to the question on "Effectual Calling" in our Shorter Catechism. "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the Gospel." This, with its leading proof passages (Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27; John vi. 44; Phil. ii. 13; 2 Tim. i. 9), forms one of the most perfect specimens of practical theology which exist in literature. At the same time we shall misuse it if we attempt to force all experience through the precise stages here laid down; and we shall seriously err if we question the validity of an experience in which they are not clearly marked. Fundamentally the movement of the human spirit Godward is in two parallel lines, increasing sense of man's need, increasing perception of God's grace. When these two come to their appropriate issue, the soul has found Christ, or been found of Him. The manner in which the Spirit deepens the sense of need, and illuminates the soul with the sufficiency of Christ, varies from

case to case, and belongs to the secret which binds God and His child together. Conversion takes place when there dawns upon the heart that double discovery, to which one of our hymns[1] gives simple and pathetic expression:

> "O, Saviour, I have nought to plead,
> In earth beneath, or heaven above,
> But just my own exceeding need,
> And Thy exceeding love."

3. THE ACT.—At no point in man's relation to God is he merely passive. As he is a responsible agent, there is always an act of his, strength for which God ceaselessly supplies by His Spirit. No man is ever brought into personal relation to Christ save through an act of his own will. This act is Faith. In the nature of the case no definition of faith can ever be complete. In it the whole personality of man is engaged, and by it the whole personal life is profoundly affected. Christ and the man are face to face. The man under constraint of the Spirit of God, yet acting on his own responsibility, abandons his position of alienation from God, and passes over to Christ. Such an act is too marvellous, summing up as it does all the man's past, inaugurating and determining all his future, to be compressed into a formula. It includes trust, the *fiducia* of the Reformers, the

[1] The Church Hymnary, No. 210.

burden of all evangelical appeal; repentance, which is the same act as faith, looked at from the *terminus a quo* rather than the *terminus ad quem;* decision, appearing under this aspect in some of the most remarkable of the Biblical biographies, *e.g.* Moses, Ruth, Mary, and, in the saddest sense, Lot, and the rich young Ruler; appropriation (Rom. xiii. 14) and consecration (Acts xxvii. 23), which are the keynotes of that movement, associated with the convention at Keswick and the writings of Andrew Murray, which has done much to quicken the life of the Church in recent days. However defined or described, Faith issues in two facts of spiritual experience. The first is Justification (Gal. ii. 16, and frequently in Paul's Epistles), relief from condemnation, and possession of righteousness. The second is Life in Christ (Gal. ii. 20, and everywhere in Paul and John), personal vital union to Christ, of whose closeness and intimacy things are said in Scripture which move us to wonder and praise. He who was once, in an evil sense, Self-determined is now Christ-determined; once an alien, now he is a citizen of the Kingdom, its servant and heir. From the point of view of religion, he is saved, or, more correctly and scripturally, he is in process of being saved, his salvation drawing nearer by every day he lives since he believed (Rom. xiii. 11). From

the point of view of Christian ethic, Christian character has begun to be formed in him.

From this too brief consideration of the sacred experience, commonly known as "conversion," a term worn sadly threadbare, one great feature emerges, viz. that it is a beginning, that certainly, but that only. Without a beginning, no progress, is a commonplace. With a beginning merely, no arrival, is also a commonplace, yet practically often forgotten.

That experience in which personal relationship is established between Christ and the man, most blessed and glorious as it undoubtedly is, is not the terminus. The salvation to which it introduces the believer has but begun. Its consummation is yet to come. The interval between the time when we believe and the time when salvation is complete is occupied not merely in the maintenance of a certain standing, but also in an actual history, the growth and development of character, the maturing of faculty and ripening of experience, the increase of service. God does not take the soul He saves and lay it, as the keeper of a museum might do a fossil, in some safe place. He saves it with a view to preparing it for use. He never ceases His operation upon it, but takes daily pains with it, till He have fashioned it for Himself. What means God uses for the discipline of character in any one individual it is

not possible to state. No biography, however complete, no autobiography, however honest, could render it in full. There is an individuality and distinctiveness in God's dealings with each human being which defies analysis, and makes at once the sacredness and the interest of spiritual life. All men are subjected, however, to three grand modes of discipline, to which reference must be made.

A. Temptation.—"God cannot be tempted with evil, and He tempteth no one;" James i. 13. We are tempted by evil. What evil is in essence and origin is for theology to discuss. The practical consequences are much the same, even if we deny a personal source of evil, though probably a growing experience of life will incline even the most sceptical to revise their early incredulity, and incline to the conviction that the phenomena of temptation are explicable only on the supposition of a Satanic agency. Temptation to evil, therefore, does not come from God. At the same time, temptation is used by God as an instrument in His hand, and wholly under His control, for the discipline of Christian character. This is the presupposition of all experience of temptation in Christian life. It is not a thing foreign to Christian experience arising from fate or chance. It belongs to the divine discipline that is shaping our lives. This at once delivers us from despair. Tempta-

tion is in God's hand. It will not exceed the severity He sees needful. It will never make sin inevitable. Always there will be a way of escape which the eye of a trained and observant faith will see (1 Cor. x. 13).

From this point of view let us consider certain outstanding features of this discipline.

1. ITS POSSIBILITY. — If a man be truly regenerate, it may be asked, how can he be subjected to the pressure of evil? Here let us grasp two clear facts. First, Sin is a broken power. We are not under its dominion; Rom. vi. 14. The wonderful 6th chapter of Romans rings out this note of victory. Second, it is never necessary to yield to temptation. If it were necessary, such yielding would not be sin. We cannot exaggerate the Christian privilege in this aspect of it; where it has been forgotten we need to be reminded of it. When we have placed our privilege, however, as high as the Bible permits, we have not yet got beyond the reach of temptation, and never shall get, so long as we remain in this world.

Consider the position of the Christian. It is true he has now entered the Kingdom of God. God's will has been accepted by him as the supreme regulative principle of his life. It is true that he has admitted Christ into the centre of his being, and that his life is rooted in Christ.

But this does not mean that from the whole domain of his being, character, and life, evil has been wholly expelled so as to be no longer a malign influence upon him. Still less does it mean that he can no longer feel the pressure of peril from the world in which he lives, with which he comes into such manifold contact, and by which he is influenced in so many ways. Rather the fact of his being a subject of the Kingdom of God, and of having Christ as the centre of his life, makes the pressure of evil the more intense. Sin, violently extruded from the centre of his spiritual nature, returns upon him in great and terrible reaction. So far from its being true that a Christian as such ought not to feel the pressure of evil, the fact is that only the Christian can feel it in its intensity. The 7th chapter of the Romans, following upon the 6th, brings out this phase of Christian experience, which many a soul, sore beset, has read as its own. The point at issue is, Shall the Self, once yielded to Christ, be subjected again to the dominion of sin? To produce this result the forces of evil are marshalled with a malignity, force, and subtlety, that suggest, if they do not prove, Satanic agency. To test and confirm the reality of the acceptance of Christ, temptation is ordained, used, and measured by God.

2. ITS FORMS.—These, of course, are infinitely

varied, and defy enumeration. Yet we can distinguish certain directions towards which the forces of evil would conduct us. *First.*—To the commission of old sins. Our characters have been weakened by certain sins in time past. Certain habits have been formed. Certain tendencies have been developed. Now, therefore, when we would fain go and sin no more, it is along the line of these old sins that the forces of evil run with most virulent power, and assail us with even greater vehemence than formerly. Allow evil its free course, and it deals with us almost gently. Resist it, and it rages against us with demoniac fury. Intemperance, lustfulness, profanity, bad temper, are conspicuous examples of this. Probably no Christian would ever seriously conclude to tolerate such giant evils. It is otherwise with less conspicuous faults. Many of us find the task of coping with them irksome, and so allow them to remain. Thus sin re-establishes itself, and the character, which should have been a harmonious whole is disorganised, distorted, and enfeebled. *Second.*—To the neglect of revealed duty. The experience of a Christian is meant to be a progressive discovery and an ever-increasing fulfilment of duty. Every revelation of duty, however, is attended, as its shadow, by the opposing power of evil. Between the man and his obedience stands the evil, which is simply the sin of his past, seeking, partly by seduction and partly by threatening, to dissuade him from its per-

formance. The struggle lies between the right, with which the man is identified, and which he is bound to achieve, and the evil with which he was once identified, and which now seeks again to bring him into bondage. Examples of this occur in the moral history of every day, as we rise toward the good and beautiful, which dawns ever more perfectly on our vision. If for any pain or trouble we decline the upward step, we pay the penalty of having the vision itself withdrawn, of being deprived of its inspiration, and being left to the lower level we have preferred. Character which ought to be progressive becomes stationary ; and in morals to be stationary is to retrograde. We cannot decline the highest, when we see it, without losing, not only it, but the moral position at which we stood when we made the refusal. The great and dramatic instances of this temptation occur in times of persecution. The evil arises, incarnated in the inquisitor, to bar the progress of the soul toward the light. The history of such times illustrates the moral situation, both by instances of noble constancy, and by cases of sorrowful lapsing, and consequent deterioration of character on the part of those who yield. *Third.*—To the denial of the Faith. The reaction of evil reaches here its intensest force. Christian character is constituted by faith in Christ. Precisely at this point, therefore, does temptation most fiercely assail the Christian. As we have

pointed out of Temptation, in general, so let us now insist with regard to this phase of it, that it is discipline, ordered and restrained by God. Doubt is not sin. There is, of course, a flippant doubt born of conceit, and a dishonest doubt, which is a mere device to excuse sin. But doubt may be, and often is, the bitter experience of genuine Christian life. Christ is the centre of life and character. If, therefore, the soul can be detached from Christ, evil will have triumphed. It is not the feeblest hold of Christ that is subjected to this strain. Rather is it the strongest, which thus provokes recoil towards unbelief. The great Biblical example is Job, whom doubt pursued to the very citadel of his faith. He was confronted by the terrible possibility of antagonism between God and his conscience. Into this all doubt ultimately concentrates. To have the highest instincts set in opposition to what we have heard of God is torture unutterable, for, if antagonism were really proved, it would mean the destruction of the moral universe, utter spiritual anarchy. To such discipline often the finest souls are subjected. It is a time most critical, requiring utmost patience on the part of all friends and counsellors, and specially on the part of those thus tempted. The issue depends on the hearing of the ear being replaced by the seeing of the eye, Job xlii. 5, 6. The conclusion may not be the removal of speculative difficulties, but it will be the revela-

tion of a spiritual relationship, to whose unfoldings the speculative solutions may be safely entrusted.

3. METHODS BY WHICH IT IS TO BE MET.—The assault of evil requires three lines of action on the part of the assailed. *First.*—The presence of evil must be detected. The requirement here is self-knowledge (1 Cor. ix. 26). The whole field of character must be minutely, carefully, and constantly kept under observation. Evil has already won the victory, if it can escape observation and intrench itself in some unnoticed weakness, some unconsidered trespass or neglect. Most wisely, therefore, must we fight, learning by dint of self-examination where evil is likely to assail us, at what points our character needs strengthening, and so concentrating our efforts towards the conquest of definite evils, and the attainment of special excellencies.

Second. — Occasions of evil must be avoided. Our duty here is careful avoidance of situations or circumstances into which the call of God does not lead, where we know evil influences will be brought to bear against us. We are to watch, to survey the territory ahead through which we propose to move. Inasmuch also as our foresight is limited and our ignorance great, to the exercise of watching must be added that of praying, lest, being left to ourselves, we should walk into an ambush (Matt. xxvi. 41).

It may even become our duty, by violent and

painful effort, to cast away from us things not necessarily evil in themselves, which, however, so operate on inherent tendencies in our own nature, as to become occasions of inevitable fall. The attainment of character is so high an aim, that no sacrifice of anything merely pleasurable is too great to make for it (Matt. v. 29, 30; Mark ix. 43-48). Our natural instinct is to deal very tenderly with sins that are pleasant, and to find many reasons for indulging ourselves in them. But, if the character whose source is Christ, is to grow up into His likeness, we must learn to be absolutely relentless, and to treat ourselves with the utmost rigour. Our Lord's words in the above passages are startling, as they cleave through all delusions and reveal the breadth and depth of the alternative. The Christianity of Christ is never easy.

Third.—The forces of evil must be resisted. Sometimes, by such means as the above mentioned, the actual conflict may be avoided. Frequently, however, in spite of watchfulness and the utmost care, the forces of evil close with us, and put our spiritual being under severe strain.

In these cases, such points as the following must be attended to. *Small temptations have to be dealt with as seriously as great ones.* By every temptation yielded to, the force of evil is increased, and our power of resistance decreased. It is of utmost importance that no known evil be permitted to

obtain permanent footing within the domain which should be wholly under the sovereignty of Christ. Christian character cannot be established in one or two brilliant feats, but must be secured by a long series of obscure and unnoticed victories. *The combatant who strikes the first blow gains profound moral advantage.* It is essential to the completeness of the victory that evil be resisted as soon as perceived. As in the old story of the Fall, argument is fatal. There is nothing to be done with sin save to resist it, and sin resisted is sin overcome (James iv. 7). *Let no mistake be made as to the condition of victory.* Morality cannot be separated from religion. It is a grave tactical blunder to attempt to fight the enemy in our own strength. Character can only be formed as the life we have in Christ is allowed to pervade our being and give us the strength required. "Remember," says a wise spiritual guide, "that it is not you who are to conquer, but He who is to conquer in you." (No wiser or more beautiful writing in Christian ethics is to be found than in the chapters on temptation in Goulburn's "Thoughts on Personal Religion.") That this strength can be had, and that it is sufficient, is as much matter of experience as the existence and efficiency of any force in the physical universe (1 John v. 4; 2 Cor. ii. 14; Ephes. vi. 16).

It is plain that temptation thus met and resisted becomes in God's hands a valuable means in the discipline of character. By temptation we are trained to detect sin when it appears, whatever its disguise, and to hate it for its moral vileness and its disastrous consequences. By temptation we obtain needed exercise for our moral powers, which are thus strengthened not merely for resistance of evil, but for attainment of good. By temptation we are led to more practical realisation of the resources we have in Christ. As the wind-blast helps to root the tree deeper in the soil, so temptation causes us to send the roots of character deeper into Christ. Without temptation character would be sapless, pithless, always immature and ineffective. We find the strain severe. Let us rejoice, since this is evidence of moral gain.

> "Was the trial sore?
> Temptation sharp? Thank God a second time!
> Why comes temptation but for man to meet
> And master and make crouch beneath his foot,
> And so be pedestalled in triumph."
> BROWNING—*Ring and the Book*; The Pope.

B. Suffering.—The mystery of pain must always remain dark to the human intellect. When we survey the pain of nature as it waits for the manifestation of the sons of God, as we read the page of history dark with tragedies of crime and

agony, as we open the daily newspaper and hear the cry of a nation weltering in blood, we feel we are in presence of a problem for which neither reason nor revelation provides a complete solution. The only clue we possess is the teaching of scripture that pain, even in nature, connects itself with sin in man; that, therefore, redemption contains within itself the promise of deliverance, not for man only, but for the realm of which he is head. It is different, however, when we turn to the discipline of character. Here we are at no loss to discern in suffering one of the means whereby God prepares a soul for the highest moral attainment; and here also we find a ray of light shining into the darkness of the larger problem. For if pain play so noble a part in the education and development of the individual, can we not conceive, dimly at least, how it should serve in the career of the wider organism, which includes all men and all created things, the same lofty end? Pain is no evil to the individual. Why should it be mere evil in the experience of humanity and the world at large? Confining our attention now to suffering as an element in the discipline of character, we observe the following points.

1. THE FORMS OF SUFFERING.—(*a*) Chastening (Heb. xii. 11; Rev. iii. 19). Here the occasion of infliction of pain is some sin in

the sufferer. This does not necessarily imply that the pain follows punctually on the offence, or corresponds in outward form with the offence. We are not, therefore, in every case to suppose that we can trace the connection. But we are able, from our general knowledge of ourselves, to say whether we have been allowing ourselves in some trespass or neglect, which has rendered chastening a necessary course of dealing with us on the part of One who has the interests of our character at heart. If this chastening involve others in grief or pain, as it frequently will, the discovery it makes of our own sin is the more keen and terrible.

(*b*) Trial (John ix. 3). Sufferings have not always their explanation in some special sin. To suppose that every sorrow we endure has its root in some sin we have committed is to do dishonour to God, and to miss the point of His discipline. Growth is more than the mere checking of one sin after another. Suffering, therefore, has a nobler end than merely to check off each sin as it is committed. What suffering is chastisement, and what is trial, cannot be determined by us in reference to any sufferer. Even with respect to ourselves, we cannot always fix definitely. God's means of discipline are inarticulate. We need to give earnest heed, until the meaning disengage itself from the circum-

stances and fill our mind with its lessons. (*c*) —Suffering for righteousness' sake (Matt. v. 10-12; x. 39). Suffering of this description is inevitable for us, living in the sphere we occupy, where evil, though defeated, continues to rage. Christ, in the highest sense, encountered the evil of the world, and defeated it in the very moment when it broke upon Him; and this the Christian has to do in so far as he follows Christ. Care has to be taken here that we should discern the figure of Christ as He goes before us, and not lose Him in the midst of our own fancies. Many have followed, even to the stake, a mere wraith, the shadow of their own pride and superstition. Many daily pride themselves on faithfulness, when the source of their suffering is mere conceit and ignorance. Be not martyrs by mistake. The only guide is the Spirit of God, given to those who live near to God. Whenever in that light we see Christ, we must range ourselves beside Him and confess Him before men. Life thus becomes a daily martyrdom, from which, even in most commonplace surroundings, the dignity of pain is not often awanting.

2. THE FUNCTIONS OF SUFFERING.—There is no aspect of character which is not refined and elevated by suffering, no Christian virtue which does not derive from suffering the greater part of its power and beauty. A complete description

of the work accomplished by suffering is therefore impossible.

The following points lie on the surface. *First*—It acts as antidote and prophylactic in reference to Sin. Physical pain is the main preservative of physical life, our chief means of knowing what hurts us, and of guiding us to the avoidance of danger. In full analogy with this, the law that connects pain with sin sets us on our guard, and directs us in a careful avoidance of sources of moral evil. "Make your fears your safeguard" is advice nobler and wiser than at first glance appears. *Second.*—It tests and purifies the character (1 Peter i. 6, 7). It acts as fire, purging out base elements from the life, and purifying and strengthening those which have affinities with Christ. Without this discipline character would be unstable and growth uncertain. *Third.*—It prepares and fits for service. This it did even for Christ (Heb. ii. 10; v. 8; ii. 18; iv. 15). Much more in our case. It does so by reducing the vigour of selfish ambitions, by separating us from circumstances which would divert us from the true end of life, and by uniting us in sympathy to our fellow-men. No education is comparable to that of pain. The world loses its glamour. Men draw us out of self by the attraction of their need. The worker is endowed with a new faculty to discern the need and meet it with

ready helpfulness. *Fourth.*—It enters as corrective into lofty privilege, and prevents rare experiences from becoming sources of temptation (2 Cor. xii. 7). A thorn in the flesh, however much it may be a messenger of Satan, is in truth a divinely appointed agency in keeping the soul humble and near the Cross. *Fifth.*—It forms the condition of entrance into the fellowship of Christ, and thus into possession of spiritual power (Rom. viii. 17; Phil. iii. 10; 1 Peter iv. 13). Here we touch on the depths of the mystery of our relation to Christ. Christ's suffering is vicarious, and as such it was the crowning revelation of God. His sufferings are continued in the persons of His people (Col. i. 24). In them, they serve the same end, being a continued proof and illustration to the world of the love of God in Christ. At the same time those who thus suffer are being brought near to God, are entering into sympathy with the divine purpose of mercy, and are drawing from the divine fulness the grace of life. Without suffering we could know neither God nor Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

It is plain, therefore, that suffering is in itself most precious, serving ends unattainable without it.

3. The Acceptance of Suffering.—Suffering is, accordingly, a divine appointment in our lives. It is, as has been well said, a vocation, the highest of all vocations, and is wrongly estimated

when it is received with irritation or anger as an interference with true success in life. This conception of suffering as an element in the divine plan of life for the Christian lies deep in the New Testament. The first Epistle of Peter is full of it, *e.g.* ii. 21. It is perhaps not altogether fanciful to regard the predominance of this thought in his Epistle as connected with his Master's express charge to him, John xxi. 18, 19: "When He had spoken this," viz. the prediction of a painful death, "He saith unto him, Follow Me." This Apostle gloried in action, but the divine plan designated him to glorify God chiefly in suffering.

The whole doctrine of suffering is condensed in our Lord's saying, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke ix. 23, and parallels). Here it is distinctly announced as a necessary element in all discipleship. The Cross is to be taken, to be embraced in an act of will. Only as thus freely undertaken will suffering discharge its varied functions in the discipline of character. Resisted, struggled against, with attempts to evade it, and a rebellious spirit under its imposition, it becomes like all rejected gifts of God, an element in the hardening of the heart, and the deterioration of character. There is nothing more pitiful than pain rendered fruitless by the revolt of the will.

A review of life ought to show us something at least of the place and value of suffering, should lead us to view with suspicion any plan of life from which pain, disappointment, and sorrow are eliminated, and should warn us not to attempt to construct such a scheme of life for ourselves. We should

> "Welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough ;
> Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand, but go !
> Be our joys three parts pain,
> Strive and hold cheap the strain ;
> Learn nor account the pang ; dare never grudge the throe."
> —BROWNING, *Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

Such a conception of the value of suffering and of the welcome we should accord it depends for its reasonableness and its profitableness on the Christian view of life. Our acceptance of suffering, therefore, must always be religious in its action.

It is to be accompanied by three activities of soul, each directed Godward—first, submission (1 Peter v. 6) ; second, patience (James v. 10, 11) ; third, trust (Rom. viii. 28). These are the spiritual conditions of profit in suffering, and not of profit only, but of comfort. We here rise above the merely moral point of view. God is not merely an operator, working up material into a certain form. He is the Father. Thus with suffering He gives comfort, which, when the suffering is duly accepted, flows unstinted into the weary heart,

taking away all repining, bitterness, or despair, replacing these with peace and joy (2 Cor. i. 4, 5 ; Rom. v. 3).

C. Work. — It is important to notice the function of work in the discipline of character. It is usual to quote Genesis iii. 17-19 as a curse. It might, with equal appropriateness, be studied as a blessing. Work as such belongs both to the sinless and the sinful stage of human history. In the sinful stage it no doubt is accompanied by peculiar hardships, but these find their explanation in the revolt of man's will, and the consequent disorder of his character. Work, however hard and difficult, is a necessary element in the education of man, and as such is an appointment of wisdom and mercy. Like suffering, work influences the growth of character in ways too numerous and subtle to admit of enumeration. Observe, however, how work corrects certain outstanding defects, and superinduces the corresponding excellency.

1. HUMILITY. — Man's first attitude towards nature is an arrogant demand that it shall yield him satisfaction. Labour teaches him another lesson. In order to successful work he must humble himself to be a pupil in Nature's school, must lay aside the presumptions of his ignorance, observe the laws of the material with which he works. He can only work as he yields himself

to these laws, and by work he is brought into harmony with them. These laws, moreover, take him beyond themselves into a realm of law, of which he is, and ought to be, the subject. To be part of an infinite whole, to be an intelligent citizen in an ordered universe, to be a willing agent in its great design, is the highest dignity of man; and this dignity work enables him to attain.

2. PERSEVERANCE.—The deepest instinct of sinful man is sheer unmitigated laziness. The savage, who makes his wife work for him, and is in some races so idle that he makes his wife feed him, is the typical natural man. His demand is that things shall be his without labour. The primitive laziness is seen in the gambling mania, whether on the turf or the stock exchange. This ruling idea is to acquire possessions without labour. The necessity of labour reveals a higher truth. No possessions, whether material, intellectual, or spiritual are so truly ours, or so readily satisfy us, as those for which we have toiled, in which we have invested our personal powers of body, mind, and spirit. When we enter on such possessions we are gaining an enlarged and ennobled nature. It is matter of common observation that possessions acquired without labour deteriorate the character. True wealth can be gained and maintained only by work. Even in case of in-

herited wealth a man can only serve himself its heir by using it as an instrument in work. Without work it will be an inheritance of curse. The miseries of the "idle rich" have passed into a proverb.

3. CONCENTRATION.—Only less natural and less culpable than idleness is unregulated activity. Energy is spent now in one direction now in another; and no greater permanent result is achieved. Along with this dissipation of energy goes disintegration of character. There can be no moral growth where there is no unity of effort. Only by limiting the exercise of power can either physical or moral development be successfully carried on. The restraints of the position in which we find ourselves, the exigencies of labour which absorb so much time and attention, form needed and valuable moral discipline.

4. SYMPATHY.—The concentration required by work would become an occasion of sin, in making the workman selfish and blind to the interests of others, did not work itself supply the antidote. He cannot do his own piece of work without keeping in view the labour of some other man whose work is needed to complete his. He is thus taught the deep moral lesson that no man can live unto himself, and that if he attempt it he must die. In work a man is an instrument in a wider good than his own. His own good, in fact, is the wider good.

The selfishness which sets man against man, trade against trade, men against masters, is not only a crime but a blunder, and entails endless loss to those who make selfish gain the sole end of labour.

5. INCREASED CAPACITY. — The richest gain of work is skill. That a man should live or grow rich by labour is a by-product. The real advantage lies in the increase of faculty, fitting the workman for finer and more perfect workmanship. All good work is done by the workman's losing sight of ulterior ends, and making the perfection of the work his sole ruling purpose. When he is finished the result is good, and he himself is ready for something higher. This moral lesson of work extends to life as a whole. We are here, not to acquire possessions other than this, higher power for higher work hereafter. This, and no more than this, God gives us:

> "Here work enough to watch
> "The Master work, and catch
> "Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play."
> —BROWNING, *Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

We understand, therefore, the conditions under which work can discharge for us these functions. It must be accepted in whatever form it comes to us, and discharged with equal fidelity whatever its apparent magnitude. This condition is laid down in the two parables of the Talents, Matt. xxv. 16-30, and the Pounds, Luke xix. 12-27, which with so

much in common have a distinct point in each. In the Talents the endowment of the workmen is different in each case, the fidelity is the same, and the reward is the same. In the Pounds the endowment is the same in each case, the fidelity differs, and the reward differs in proportion to the fidelity. In both parables the reward consists in ampler opportunity of service. There is no higher morality than absolute fidelity to our station and its duties. There is no higher moral attainment than that of being "a good and faithful servant." By work, God fits us to His hand.

Looking back over this sketch of the discipline of character, we cannot miss the practical issue. God takes us in hand. We are the clay, He the potter. But we must not use this analogy to blind us to a fundamental truth. We are personal beings, and God deals with us as persons. Not even to bless us will He derogate aught from our dignity as men. We are never mere clay, or mere machines. We stand free before God, either to accept or reject His discipline.

> "God, whose pleasure brought
> Man into being, stands away
> As it were a hand-breadth off, to give
> Room for the newly-made to live,
> And look at him from a place apart,
> . . . . . .
> whose plan
> Was to create man and then leave him

Able, His own word saith, to grieve Him,
But able to glorify Him too
As a mere machine could never do."
—BROWNING, *Christmas Eve.*

We are called on, therefore, to place ourselves freely in His hand, that He may have His way with us, and make of us what He would. This act implies three elements. First, Surrender (Rom. vi. 13); second, Intelligent recognition of the end in view, and entire consecration to it (Phil. iii. 14); third, Trust, that infinite love and wisdom devised the discipline, ordained its forms, and will preserve the subject of it safe till the end be reached (2 Tim. i. 12). The poet's prayer well expresses the true attitude of a soul under discipline:—

"But I need, now as then
Thee, God, who mouldest men!
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I, to the wheel of life,
With shapes and colours rife,
Bound dizzily, mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst:

"So take and use Thy work,
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim,
My times be in Thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!"
—BROWNING, *Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

(For exposition of Browning's conception of life I know nothing better than "Sermons from Browning," by Rev. F. Ealand, M.A., London: Elliot Stock. A small but most helpful book. I regret to learn that it is now out of print.)

CHAPTER III.

THE CULTURE OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER: PHYSICAL AND MENTAL POWERS.

WE have hitherto been looking at Christian character from the point of view of the divine source in which it originated, and the divine guidance by which it is developed. We are now to consider it from the point of view of the individual in whom it appears, of whose personal being it is the expression. We can never neglect, as we can never logically comprehend, the double aspect, divine and human, in the personal life of man. Character in one aspect is made by God; in another it is self-made. Neglect the former and we become mere moralists. Neglect the latter and we become unethical mystics, or antinomian fanatics. The divine and the human can never be brought together in a formula. But in studying the one we ought never to forget the other, and in actual life the two must appear in the practical unity of character. If, therefore, in what has now to be said we speak mainly of our responsibilities in respect to the making of character, let us take with us, as abiding presupposition, all that we have

learnt of God's power and discipline, in producing the result of ripe Christian character.

In this chapter we take the leading departments of our constitution as men, and endeavour to see how each of them enters into our moral life, and how, through our behaviour in respect to them, our character is built up.

A. The Body.—I. ITS IMPORTANCE FOR CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.—Man is not pure spirit. The abstract separation of spiritual and material, with the consequent contempt of the material, was the rock upon which Greek Philosophy split. When applied practically this wide distinction has been fraught with disastrous consequences. If the body be absolutely distinct from the soul, two ways of treating it are open. Either it may be viewed as the enemy of man's true life, and maltreated accordingly, or it may be looked upon as wholly indifferent to the moral life, and indulged in all its lusts and passions. Both these extremes have been actually practised, even in the history of the Christian Church. Both arise from the presupposition, for which there is no support in Scripture or in reason, that Man is spiritual only, and that his body is something lying outside the domain of his spiritual life. We sometimes speak of the body as the vesture of the soul, by which it makes itself manifest, or as the instrument of the soul, by which it carries out its

purposes; but we must be careful not to imagine that the body is to the soul as clothing is to the body or a tool to the hand. We may lay aside our clothing or set down our tools, and yet remain ourselves, intact. We cannot so treat our bodies. They are part of ourselves. We cannot part with them and remain complete personalities. Christianity does not recognise man as a Ghost or Shade. Its doctrine of immortality must be taken in immediate connection with its doctrine of the resurrection of the body. The body is instinct with the soul. The soul is incarnate in the body. Health is commonly defined as *mens sana in corpore sano.* Holiness might be defined in the same way as a state of complete manhood, in which the whole man, body included, is wholly transformed, and raised to the design of his creation. To suppose that Paul's contribution to theology is the conception of a resurrection of Christ so spiritual in character that the historic event in Joseph's garden may be left an open question, is entirely to misconceive him. He is not a Greek philosopher. He is working out the revelation of redemption, and is teaching that that redemption includes the body. If it does not, it has failed. The famous 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians is not a philosophic disquisition on the immortality of the soul. It is an application of redemption to the body. The body, accordingly, is not an outlying territory

which might be neglected, if only the kingdom be established in the soul. Nor is it itself an enemy which has to be crushed before the kingdom can be secure. It comes within the domain of the kingdom. It has to be occupied by the King. Its powers have to be dedicated to His service, and trained for His perfect use. Let not the special point of Rom. xii. 1 be forgotten. It is often rendered, "present *yourselves* as living sacrifices," but what Paul says, and means, is, "present *your bodies*." This actual flesh and blood body is to be a sacrifice, living, not dead, in the fulness of its function, laid upon the Altar. It is plain, therefore, that the culture of Christian character cannot proceed without careful study of the body, and a most earnest watchfulness in all the relations of life into which it enters.

2. BODILY SINS,—Sin is, no doubt, an act of the man, of his self-determining will. Sin resides there, in the seat of the man's responsibility. But the various sides of his nature may in turn provide the suggestion of evil, and the field for its operation. It is open to the man to turn any part of his being against the divine end which should govern the whole complex constitution.

The body, therefore, is not itself sinful, and is not to be hated or abused as though it were. It is not, as General Gordon with his strong mystical bias was wont to say, "the life-long foe" of the

soul. Every affection, instinct, passion, of the body is in itself pure and good, but any one of them provides scope and opportunity for man, in his self-will and disobedience, to break the divine law of his being. The specialty of the body, in this respect, is that the cravings of the flesh are keener than those of other aspects of our nature, and the pleasures connected with their satisfaction of a more instant and obvious kind. Hence temptations to sin in the body have an impetuosity and brute force most overwhelming to the untried soul. It is to be observed also that bodily habits tend to obtain a fixity and mastery of a special, and often very terrible, kind. There is no more pitiable object in the world than the man who has suffered his will to be submerged beneath the imperious rule of a physical habit. Drunkenness will occur at once as the outstanding instance of this. Temptations to bodily sin occur with greatest frequency and force in youth, when the discipline of character has not yet brought the various elements of our nature into their ordained harmony. They occur too in seasons, such as deep dejection or high excitement, when some powerful emotion has overshadowed the supremacy of the will. At all such times there must be careful watching and prompt action to cope with the force of evil suggestion.

In the conquest of bodily sins the general prin-

ciples referred to above in speaking of temptation (pp. 51-53) are applicable. To these may be added the following more specific directions:—

(*a*) *Clearly understand the penalty of bodily sin.*—All sin has its appropriate penalty; but in the case of bodily sin the penalty is more obvious, is more dramatic in its exact correspondence to the very form of the offence, and follows more simply than in other breaches of law. Bodily sins are of the kind that go before men to judgment (1 Tim. v. 24). Abuse the body, make it the instrument of self-indulgence, and it becomes itself the instrument of our chastisement. There is a terror about the inevitableness with which suffering follows sin in the body which is more tremendous than any invective of the preacher. The solemn restraint, the absolute certainty of Galatians vi. 7, 8 is the most awful thing in literature. "One of the most short and telling sermons I ever heard," says Dr Wells,[1] "was by a friend who had charge of an hospital. Going round his wards with him one Sabbath morning we came to a young man whose secret sins had found him out. As the doctor laid bare his hideous sores—the sight was enough to sicken you—he said in a slow and solemn tone, 'Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' 'For'—still uncovering and dressing the running sores—'he

[1] "Bible Echoes," p. 82.

that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption.' The poor man's face changed colour, his eyeballs grew larger, and I felt as if I had been present at the last judgment." Add to this the fact, amply established by science, that disease may be transmitted to posterity. In a popular treatise on medicine,[1] the following statement occurs: "A parent who may have inherited a robust enough constitution may himself acquire a disease, syphilis, for example, which he then hands down to his child; or by drunkenness or other excesses he may transmit a constitution, if not actually diseased, at least very prone to disease." The following example is also given:—"First generation—Immorality, depravity, alcoholic excess, and moral degradation in the great-grandfather, who was killed in a tavern brawl; second generation—Hereditary drunkenness, attacks of mania, ending in general paralysis in the grandfather; third generation—Sobriety, but tendencies to delusions, delusions of persecutions, &c., and tendencies to homicide in the father; fourth generation—Defective intelligence, first attack of mania at sixteen, stupidity, ending in complete idiocy." To be ourselves afflicted in body for our "pleasant vices" is bad. To hand on to generations yet unborn the consequences of our deeds

[1] "The Household Physician," p. 6, by Dr J. Macgregor-Robertson, M.A. Blackie & Son.

in the body is a thought from which even the most hardened might recoil. Set this between us and bodily excess.

(*b*) *Get a soul-subduing sight of the guilt and heinousness of bodily sin.—First.*—It dishonours God in His own image. By the fact of creation we are bound to do justice to the whole of our complex nature. Each element in it has its part to play in that glorifying of God which is the end of our being. It is our duty, therefore, to see that each element is competent to play this part, and is set free to do so. The body has its share in the glorifying of God. If we divert it from this end, and use it for self-gratification, if we so treat it that it becomes incapable of rendering this service of praise, we are insulting its Maker in the grossest and most presumptuous way. *Second.*—It is theft of God's property. The general obligation of creation becomes intensified from the point of view of redemption. The broad fact is that we are "not our own" (1 Cor. vi. 19; Rom. xiv. 7, 8). We have no independent rights in any part of our being. Our bodies are not our own. To treat them as though they were, to make them instruments of our own selfish purposes, is theft of a peculiarly mean and disgraceful kind. We are content that God should get our souls, about the "salvation" of which we are occasionally anxious; but our bodies we require for ourselves as the

instrument of our pleasures! We cannot so trifle with redemption. Its immediate inference is that Christ is Lord of all. To confess Him as such is condition of salvation (Rom. x. 9). To deny Him in this His rightful supremacy is to subvert the fundamental conditions of salvation. There is only one thing to be done with our members, viz., that they should be yielded as "servants to righteousness" (Rom. vi. 19). To employ them in any other service is sheer dishonesty. *Third.*—It is sacrilege. The spiritual function of the redeemed person has to be remembered. God dwelt in the Temple of old as a symbol of His dwelling in and with His redeemed and covenanted people. When the shadow gave way to the substance, the place of the marble and golden Temple was taken by human beings redeemed and brought into covenant with God. "Ye are the Temple of the living God" (2 Cor. vi. 16). We, in the fulness of our human nature, are "an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephes. ii. 22). The thought is wonderful, unspeakable; but there can be no question as to the matter of fact. The immediate consequences of the fact are obvious. To admit any defilement into God's Temple, to employ His Temple for any other worship than His, is sacrilege of the most guilty kind. This conception of our being God's Temple applies with special force to our bodies. God inhabits us; we inhabit

them; therefore they contain God. The thing is so obvious that Paul turns upon those who sin in the body with an indignant question—"What! Know ye not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. vi. 19). A bodily member prostituted to blasphemy, drunkenness, fornication, or any unhallowed use, is a deadly crime against the majesty and holiness of the Indwelling God. There are many Christians who seem able to sin in the body with a light heart. There are parts of the country where alcoholic excess is not regarded as a blemish on the character, even of persons eminent for reputation of piety. Elsewhere, even fornication is thought of with indulgence as a trifle. Such estimates run counter to the plain teaching of the New Testament, and exhibit an utterly inadequate conception of what is involved in redemption. Let young men especially lay it to heart that bodily sin means dark deadly guilt, for which there will be a terrible reckoning, begun in this world, continued in that which is to come.

(*c*) *Put in practice a wise and strenuous discipline.* —The general aim is self-mastery. We must have the body a ready and fit instrument for the divine will. The analogy of athletic exercises lies on the surface; and is used by Paul (1 Cor. ix. 25-27). As the athlete treats his body that it may lend itself to his purpose, training it down till every superfluous ounce of flesh is removed, and noth-

ing remains but the well-knit frame full of grace and strength; so for his higher ends ought the Christian athlete to treat his body, giving it sufficient food and rest for his purpose, and being very careful that it shall never be so pampered as to be a hindrance in reaching the heavenly goal. This general direction raises many questions of detail in the settlement of which, as there is room for Christian liberty, so is there a special call for careful study and wise consideration of all the elements involved. The most pressing of all these questions is that which concerns the use of alcohol. Technical points as to whether alcohol is a food or a poison, as to the efficacy of its use as a medicine, as to the meaning of certain Hebrew and Greek words in the Bible, and the customs of the Jews in ancient times, may be left to specialists. The prominence given to them in discussions of the subject is misleading. The question for the individual lies wholly apart from such matters. Two points are clear. (1) The use of alcohol as a beverage involves risk to the person partaking. (2) Alcohol is in society at large a source of unspeakable evil, and is a prevailing temptation to vast numbers of our fellow human beings and fellow Christians. The Bible lays down no legal command; and therefore the Church ought not to attempt to do so. But it may well be urged upon the conscience of

the individual to consider whether he ought not (*a*) for his own sake, (*b*) for the sake of others, to abstain from the use of alcohol as a beverage. Such arguments as that of Rom. xiv. 15-23 bear very closely on the question, and the conclusion to which they point seems strongly to favour the practice of total abstinence. Whatever be the theory of the matter, there can be no doubt that for persons in full strength, who can do their work on water, the use of alcohol is unnecessary and undesirable.

Such questions may be disputable cases of conscience. If, however, a lust tend to gain the mastery over the will, there is no question as to the plain duty. Paul's habit was, in his own vigorous language, to give his body a knock-down blow. If the lust rises in war against the soul, there is nothing to be done but hit out, straight from the shoulder. Whatever else is permissible, this thing must not be. So Joseph faced round on his tormentor. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" There is no room for debate. There must be studious avoidance of the sources of temptation (2 Tim. ii. 22; 1 Cor. vi. 18). There must be instant suppression of the evil on its first appearance (Col. iii. 5; Rom. viii. 13).

3. CARE OF THE BODY.—The body is not our own; therefore it is to be cared for as scrupulously

as an honest man cares for the property of another. The general aim must be efficiency for the divine uses of the body. It is not only permissible, but our bounden duty to see that this efficiency is fully maintained. To neglect the body, or to overwork it, is sin against God, and will receive appropriate penalty. Many good men, and more good women require this warning. To most people, however, it is necessary to point out that care of the body must be kept clear of every taint of selfishness. Three aspects of this care may be mentioned. (*a*) *Dress.*—This is, no doubt, a woman's question mainly. Yet such a creature is known as the male exquisite, surely one of the most ridiculous specimens of our race. Less absurd in some respects, but more common is the man who permits himself to exhibit his slovenliness and untidiness before the public gaze, and has even been known to take a pleasure in these things as proofs of his manly independence! Clothing unquestionably expresses character. If a man be pure-minded, modest, self-denying, honest, he will know how to dress. With respect to women, it does not become a man to speak with any high degree of confidence. It may be alleged, however, without risk of misunderstanding, that the temptation of women is to spend too much pains upon adornments, and the following suggestions from the present point of view

may perhaps be offered. *First.*—Dress well. A woman glorifies God by doing all in her power to be beautiful. It is part of her function in the world. Beauty has moral power. That she should be careful in such things is right and fitting. Only be sure to make the noblest types your model. The sense of the beautiful needs training. *Second.*—Be true to nature. Where fashion travesties nature, be brave to break away. Fashion will soon follow. In the name of truth and honesty, as well as for the sake of health and comeliness, abjure all abominations of paint, powder, dyes, and all the devices by which the weak and vain strive to make themselves other than God intended them to be, and so earn His judgment, and the contempt of the very men for whom such women do these things. *Third.*—Observe a due proportion between expense of dress and the claims of higher concerns. To dress at the expense of health, denying the body its proper nourishment in order to cover it with foolish ornament, is a crime which brings its own penalty. To spend freely on dress, and give grudgingly to the cause of Christ, is a mean and hateful sin. There can be no question that women, even in the middle rank, are now carrying upon their bodies in the shape of needless adornment, the cost of urgently needed developments of Christian work both at home

and abroad. In a word, the philosophy of dress for women is summed up in such passages as 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10; 1 Peter iii. 3, 4. The key to dressing well is living well, thinking continually of things that are lovely.

(*b*) *Health.*—It is obvious that we ought to maintain our bodies in health. We cannot do any kind of work well if our bodies are not in good order. Above all, in ill-health we are liable to certain forms of temptation, *e.g.* irritability, evil temper, and alcoholic excess. Ill-health may be sent us by permission of God in the process of His discipline. But for us to injure our health by neglect, or carelessness, or trespass of plain laws of nature, is sin, and leads to sin. This duty may, of course, be perverted into sheer self-indulgence. For a man to withdraw from active work, and spend his life in looking after his health, will need some very strong justification in the special circumstances of the case. The temptation to weak valetudinarianism must be resisted to the uttermost, else the character will miserably dwindle. Apart from this error, we ought for the sake of the work God calls us to do, to preserve by all means in our power our physical efficiency. We ought to acquaint ourselves with the laws which regulate our physical well-being. Ignorance, in these days of free education and cheap literature, is inexcusable

even in the humblest ranks. A clear understanding of these laws is as attainable as any other part of education. The duty of acquiring this kind of information, and putting it into practice, is as binding as the duty of hearing and obeying any other part of the will of God. It is satisfactory to know that, with the development of civilisation, marked improvement has taken place on the whole, but still much requires to be done. Under proper sanitary conditions the death-rate in towns ought to be no more than 12 or 13 per 1000. But in Dublin the death-rate is, or was very recently, 40, implying probably 50 or 60 for the poorer parts of the city. In Edinburgh, the death-rate is still about 21. A great responsibility rests on corporations, but men and women who are, or hope soon to be, householders, have much in their own hands. Especially ought fathers and mothers to instruct their growing boys and girls in certain facts of nature, ignorance of which may work much woe, which a little timely information might have averted.

(*c*) *Athletics.*—In one respect, modern life is a vast advance even on comparatively recent periods. The necessity of physical exercise is now well understood, and means are being taken to supply it in the case, not only of men, but of women. This is altogether as it ought to be. At the same time it is not without its dangers. What began

as healthful sport may become an all-absorbing pursuit, and instead of being a useful means towards an end, may become an end in itself, and absorb to itself energies of body and soul, which ought to be given to higher things. Take the following hints :—*First.*—If the particular sport in question unfit for work or worship, it ought to be restrained, or even abandoned. Football is a noble game. But if the Saturday be so spent on it that body and soul are unfit for the exercise of worship on Sunday, perhaps even for routine of work on Monday, football has become a snare, and it behoves a young man, who does not regard himself as a mere animal, to keep it within bounds, or even give it up for some less absorbing form of recreation. *Second.*—If the special form of recreation lead to dissipation, it must be avoided. Young men are the custodians of our national sports. Let them see to it that they be so conducted that a man may join in them without fear of contamination, and get the physical good of them without losing the purity of his Christian character. And if things have come to such a pass that gambling and drinking are inextricably associated with them, it is high time for Christian young men to deny themselves the pleasure of them. The experience of many, who are not by any means effeminate or stupidly old-fashioned, is that in respect to some games, this time has even

now come. It is to be hoped this is exceptional. But let all such enjoyments be resigned rather than have any young man lose the integrity of his Christian character.

Third.—The expenses connected with athletics must be carefully regulated, and a proper proportion observed between such expenses and the claims of higher causes. It is to be feared that multitudes of young men have bicycles, who own scarcely a book of standard literature, and contribute nothing to any philanthropic or religious purpose. Contrary to Scripture, they "take pleasure in the *legs* of a man," and, apparently, in no other part of him! A darker side to this question is the undoubted fact that the expensiveness of many amusements leads many foolish lads into debt and dishonesty, with much consequent shame and moral disaster. In all questions of detail with respect to recreation, the scriptures afford no help in the way of legislation. But they present to us a type of character which, if we become assimilated to it, will guide us to a practical solution. Let a young man set his heart on reaching "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephes. iv. 13), and he will not be satisfied with any one-sided and distorted growth, but will learn both how to cultivate his body, and at the same time to bring it into subjection, as an element

and instrument in the completeness of Christian character.

B. The Mind.—Without venturing into the fascinating region of animal psychology, or questioning the well-authenticated facts of animal intelligence adduced by so conscientious a writer as the late Professor Romanes, it may be confidently asserted that man is more than a mere animal. He is endowed with "a reasonable soul." There is a mental as well as a physical aspect of his constitution. It is a strange and ominous circumstance that multitudes of young men emerge from our Board Schools without apparently having realised this fact. It is not merely that they have no interest in religion, which is deplorable certainly, but they have no interest in any intellectual concerns. Their whole energy, after their daily tasks are ended, is absorbed in sport. Literature for them has no other representative than the sporting column in the daily newspaper. Their chief intellectual stimulus is the report of the last football match. It would be something, and might lead to more, if young men could lift themselves above the plane of the material, and understand that they have nobler faculties than those of the body, and a higher destiny than merely physical satisfaction.

Neglect of mental power may proceed from an opposite point of view, viz. that man is more and higher even than an intellectual being. Christians

have sometimes allowed themselves to use contemptuous language respecting mental endowments and mental culture, which has no warrant in Scripture. There is no slur cast on mind, its improvement and its achievements, from one end of the Bible to the other. Its writers, not only Moses, who had the education of a prince, but herdmen like Amos, and fishermen like Peter, are men of high intellectual capacity and rich mental culture. The Bible idea of holiness is closely akin to that of wholeness, integrity of being, completeness of life and function. To neglect any part of our constitution as men is to insult Him who designed it, and desires no maimed gift, but a whole burnt-offering, for His praise. In pursuing this thought we note three points :—

1. THE DUTY OF MENTAL CULTURE.—If it be certain that the body has its place and function in the growth of Christian character, it is yet more evident that mind has special ethical importance ; and the duty of doing justice to its capacities is yet more obviously binding. (*a*) Consider the mind as an instrument or organ of the personal life of man. The body works within narrowest limits of space and time. It can affect only what it can immediately touch. To the mind neither space nor time present any limitation. They are forms by which it construes and interprets to itself the manifold fulness of the universe. It inhabits space, and

traverses time. It can present to itself objects in remotest space or most distant time, and make them part of its stock. The body, confined within narrow limits, can effect but little even within them. Body can move body; body can never touch or influence mind. The unspeakable folly of those who suppose that by physical force they can affect the progress of mind or spirit has been evident to all thoughtful persons. It is instanced by our Lord as comfort to His disciples in persecution (Luke xii. 4), and has been exemplified not only in the case of martyrs of the faith, but in the case of witnesses, like Galileo, to intellectual truth. Mind is the mightiest influence in the world. It can bend nature to its purposes, and make material things bear the impress of its conceptions, and carry out its designs. It sways the history of nations, constrains the most turbulent fury, compels the most tumultuous force to obey its purposes. In competition of man with man, victory lies with mental power. The most magnificent brute must yield, in the long run, to the sway of intellectual force. The body is no doubt a very marvellous organ, fearfully and wonderfully made, with a complexity and adjustment of parts which make the study of it of profound and enthralling interest. When all has been said, however, the mind remains yet more marvellous in power, more delicate in structure, more intimately connected with the

personal life. With a maimed body, the spiritual life remains intact. Its achievements are undiminished in extent or importance. Let the mind suffer injury, and the man himself ceases to be an effective agent, in any department of life, lower or higher. If the care of the body, therefore, as organ and instrument of man, be a binding duty, much more does mental culture stand out as an obligation laid upon us by Him who made us after so sublime a pattern.

(*b*) The same conclusion forces itself upon us when we consider mind in relation to character. Mental and moral growth cannot be disentangled. It is happily matter of common observation that growth in Christian character is accompanied by heightening of mental faculty. The Bible heroes were men of culture, though some of them had no conventional education. Their walk with God, their sympathy with spiritual conceptions and purposes, enlarged their mental horizon, quickened their mental powers, made them poets, prophets, historians, and enabled them to write in a diction which, even as it appears in translations, ranks high in literary merit. The same fact appears in our own country. To this day we have peasants who, in all that constitutes real culture, come in no way behind the smartest product of school or college; and this they owe, unquestionably, to the power of godliness, quickening their whole

being, in its intellectual no less than in its moral aspect. It is happily within reach of shepherd and crofter, miner and factory hand, to be a refined and cultured gentleman. Walking with God, holding fellowship in Word, Sacrament, and Prayer with infinite Love, Wisdom, and Holiness, he may attain a fulness of mental power which makes him compeer of the highest intellectual ability. The converse is also true. Mental culture is essential to moral growth. Intellectual interest is necessary to success, even in mechanical employment. The mason, stonecutter, or engineer, increases in efficiency in proportion as he exerts his intellectual power upon the work before him. Much more does this apply to the art of living. The ethical doctrine of Socrates was condensed into the saying, "Virtue is Knowledge." This contains an important truth. To perform an action in blind obedience to law, custom, or convention, is not, strictly speaking, a moral act. The thing done may be formally right, but we, in doing it, have not moral character. We are mere machines. Only when we see the meaning of the act, relate it consciously to the principle it expresses, and understand its bearing on other persons, are we really moral in the doing of it. Character grows as insight deepens. To be good men we require to think about life. Unless we cultivate mental power, we shall not think clearly. Hence mental

culture is directly required in aid of moral growth. There is no premium put on stupidity. Mental indolence is moral fault, which will involve inevitable penalty. When situations of moral perplexity arise, trained intelligence will aid in the application of moral principle; while the man who has been content to let his intellect lie dormant, and live by moral rule of thumb, will flounder amid doubts, and land himself in serious error. Mental culture is, therefore, the duty of all who admit the obligation of moral excellence.

2. CULTIVATION OF MENTAL FACULTIES.—It is a pity that the science of psychology has hitherto been locked up in books written in an uncouth technical terminology. If we are properly to cultivate mind, we need to know, in outline at any rate, our mental constitution. The task of giving such an outline is, of course, impossible here. It will be enough to dwell on the fact that, just as we ought to develop each member of the body and see that both arms and lower limbs obtain a fair amount of exercise, so we ought to secure that all our mental powers shall be developed together. Of course the exigencies of work require us to concentrate and specialise, and so to use certain of our powers in excess of others. The botanist requires one set of faculties for his special work, the mathematician another for his, the commercial man for his, and so on. Plainly, however,

the man himself is more than botanist, mathematician, or shopkeeper, and, if he is to be a whole man, he cannot afford to neglect any of his mental powers. A man, whose physical energy ran solely to the developing of arm or leg, would be a monster. So the man whose mental power is absorbed in recording observations, or making calculations, or piling up money, is an intellectual and moral monster. It behoves us to see what powers we have, and to bestow careful cultivation on them all. This is true culture. It is easy to make fun of culture, by looking at those in whom it means no more than a way of wearing clothes or using cant phrases. Properly viewed it is noble and right.

By way of illustration, take three great faculties of mind :—

(*a*) *Reason.*—This is the power by which the things and persons around us become intelligible to us. How, we ask, is knowledge possible? Various philosophical systems rush upon us open-mouthed with conflicting answers. The answer of the Bible, and, let it be said, the answer of the latest and noblest philosophy, is that knowledge is possible because the world outside us is itself a revelation of reason or spirit, with which our reason or spiritual being is in essence one. The work of reason, therefore, is to discover the reason there is in things, and so to trace in the mass

of things presented to our observation, order, harmony, and completeness. This is the task of reason as such, and of every reasonable being. No doubt the task requires special sciences and special men; but it is none the less the task of all endowed with reason. Men of science are simply our ministers in this very thing. To neglect this task is unworthy of our constitution as men. The attainment of truth is a divine obligation, even when the connection between the fact and our individual interest is not obvious at present. Truths once considered remote and useless, have been found to be intimately connected with our welfare, and have been employed in applied science. The strict correlation of truth and well-being may never be fully discovered; but the duty of seeking truth is printed deep in our mental constitution. The cultivation of reason is, therefore, a plain duty, binding not only on the leisured classes, but on the man of humblest and most laborious employment. To neglect its cultivation is sin. Much more is it sin to pervert its use, and employ it, not to lay bare to our reverent gaze the traces of the working of the divine mind, but to support some prejudice, to prove some opinion, to advance some system of our own. The culture of reason is, therefore, in itself and for its own sake, right and dutiful. It has its reward, however, in moral excellence. It is true,

of course, that exercise of reason is accompanied by moral danger, and may give rise to pride, obstinacy, and dogmatism. It is certain, however, that these intellectual vices are notes of the misuse of reason. Reason cannot be truly exercised in pursuit of truth without increasing at the same time the virtues of sincerity, impartiality, candour, patience, humility, and reverence. Holiness and wisdom are combined in God, and are meant to be combined in the ideal of Christian character.

(*b*) *Imagination.*—The facts, in which order and harmony lie, as it were, hid, do not always or often occur in exactly the combination required to give at once the idea of the whole of which they are part. The man of Science has to bring his facts from many different quarters, and out of them construct his idea. In this work, imagination plays a great part. It is the power of seeing, or foreseeing, the completed whole in the fragments presented to the eye. Imagination is not solely or properly employed in fiction; its real function is to enable us to see facts in their completeness, and as such it is largely employed in science and history. Its use in moral life is great and important. Its function is to see and to envisage things that are great and good, so that they shall not merely be painfully pieced together by slow process of

reason, but shall be flashed upon the inner eye in their glorious fulness. In this operation there are very serious risks, calling for great care in the exercise of this faculty. Barely as a faculty, it will embody in mental pictures evil as well as good; and evil, thus embodied, has most disastrous effects on moral soundness. Imagination uncontrolled may become polluted, may taint or defile character at its birth, may strengthen lust, may seduce or hurry into sin and vice. It may lodge in the mind that which no effort can obliterate, pictures which refuse to vanish, and which gleam out on the ashamed and humiliated soul, long after conscience has condemned them, the will forsaken them, and even the desire ceased to yearn for them. The control and education of the imagination is, therefore, urgently demanded. Exercise the imagination upon all that is fairest in nature, art, literature. Even dwellers in smoky towns are not excluded from means of cultivating the imagination. The narrowest lane is, like Kant's garden space, *unendlich hoch.* Let the mind be a gallery of noble pictures, and the soul will rise by their contemplation (Phil. iv. 8).

(*c*) *Memory.* — This is the power by which things past are kept in perpetual presence before the mind, and thus, distant though they may be, in point of time, are made an element and influence

in the life and action of the present. It is plain that all growth in knowledge and in character depends on this great power, which, as men, we possess, of causing the swiftly fleeting years to abide with us, and become formative influences in the living present, and useful guides for days to come, so that the sun stands still on Gibeon and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, and we live in the light of the never absent past. The culture of memory, therefore, is essential to attainment of moral excellence. Live carefully. Pay rational heed to the events, even comparative trifles, which make up the discipline of daily life. So shall these things stand in memory and be the teachers of the soul in occasions of emergency and perplexity. "The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise." To let any day pass into the limbo of an unheeded and unremembered past is folly, a deliberate abandonment of our standing as men and reversion to the type of animal life, which we may picture to ourselves as a series of impressions, unrelated to a permanent and developing ethical Self. Strictly speaking, the past cannot be forgotten. Here memory stands unique among the powers of mind. Neglect it as we may, it does not become extinct as a faculty. Men cannot forget. Only God can forget. Memory registers deterioration as well as growth. To remember,

never to be able to forget the deeds which have manifested the downward trend of character, the loss of our spiritual heritage, would be a doom to whose horror we need not add the physical imagery of worm and flame. Hold this as a deterrent before you, when evil tempts you. From this flee to One, who alone can both forgive and forget, "for," He says, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. xxxi. 34).

3. THE USE OF BOOKS.—Mental culture of a high and beautiful kind may be possessed by those who have but little access to books; and those who have read many books may remain, in fact, uncultivated. At the same time, books have an influence in mental culture and moral growth which cannot be exaggerated. Books preserve for us the inheritance of the past. Stored in books are the great thoughts by which the ages have summed up the experience of life, and the great lives which have moulded history, and formed the guide and inspiration of successive generations. These are our spiritual heritage. We are meant to enter upon it, and by it grow wiser, stronger, nobler. This we can only do by reading. To neglect the use of books is to cut ourselves off from our rightful inheritance, to make ourselves wilfully poor. Books open out to us an immense field of mental exercise, of purest pleasure, and

lead us into the most ennobling companionship. By a little self-denial even the humblest wage-earner can endow himself with all the world's best riches. Sitting in his humble chamber, when the day's work is done, he may pass to the most distant reaches of the universe, and traverse at will the pathway of the stars. Living hard and frugally he may enjoy, when his poor meal is ended, pleasures rarer and higher than the voluptuary can ever know, and may feast his soul on truth, beauty, and goodness. Solitary in his lodgings, he may become the companion of Homer and Dante, of Shakespeare and Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning. To him they will unveil their secrets, pour out their wealth of mind, and sing their gladdest, their most pathetic, their most solemn lays.

That a young man, with mental power and adequate education, should deliberately prefer the obscenities of the street, the degradations of the public house, the frivolities of the ball-room, is one of the mysteries of human deterioration. Books strengthen our jaded faculties, and enable us to do more efficiently the work of life. If any trade so works its operatives that fatigue of body entirely destroys mental power, and deprives those who would read and improve their minds of the capacity and opportunity for so doing, there is a distinct call for change in the conditions of

the occupation. The plea that more time would simply mean more opportunity for dissipation is a mere excuse of selfishness on the part of those who chiefly profit by the long hours of labour. Where the time is afforded, however, the weight of responsibility rests on the individual workman. If he then abuse the period of rest, and, by his method of spending it, wastes rather than recuperates his powers, he ought to understand that he is doing grievous wrong, first, to himself, then, to his employer, above all, to his fellow-workmen, upon whom he brings the burden of an evil reputation, and possibly the forfeiture of the liberty he was unworthy to enjoy. "A man," no doubt, is "a man for a' that," and we may freely discount such mere externalities as rank and wealth. But the man who deliberately allows the noblest part of him to lie waste, and spends in idleness and folly hours in which he might be growing more widely informed, more richly cultivated, is less than a man, and tends ever to sink downward in the scale of moral being.

We ought, therefore, as part of the culture, not only of mind, but of character, to make wise use of books. Take these brief hints. *Read with a purpose.* There are many who read with no higher aim than that they have in view in smoking, to induce a pleasant sensation, and fill their vacant mind with the semblance of occupation. No doubt

it is permissible to read as a means of pleasure, and fiction has its place. Even so, however, the dominant purpose of reading must be mental culture. Any work of fiction, which makes the mind incapable of steady effort and lofty thought, stands thereby condemned. A vast proportion of the fiction which pours weekly from the press is of this ignoble order. *Read systematically.* Choose some definite line of study. The interests of your trade, the annals of your town, the history of your country, open out into fruitful fields of study. The domain of the special sciences awaits you. Biography presents opportunity of noblest exercise. It will go hard with you if you cannot, even in a remote hamlet, find some library, public or private, where your difficulty will be not the scantiness, but the wealth of the material provided. Take your line and keep to it, and be not led astray into mere desultory browsing. "Reading, in the case of mere miscellaneous readers, is like the racing of some little dog about the moor, snuffing everything, and catching nothing; but a reader of the right sort finds his prototype in Jacob, who wrestled with an angel all night, and counted himself the better for the bout, though the sinew of his thigh shrank in consequence" (Blackie, "Self-Culture," p. 29).

Read great books. Hear the genial Professor, whose wise and witty counsel has been so welcome: "Stick to the great books, the original books, the

fountain-heads of great ideas and noble passions, and you will learn joyfully to dispense with the volumes of accessory talk, by which their virtue has been as frequently obscured as illuminated." Possess yourself of the great book on your subject, and this will act as your guide through its general literature, and will enable you to estimate and use it aright. Above all, read the Bible, which stands *facile princeps* amid the universal literature of the race. By your estimate of this, your mental grasp and your moral character can be most certainly gauged. In all your study, its steady light will illumine your path. It will absorb into itself, and restate in the light of its own principles, all truth; and will make its earnest, humble student, as fearless, frank, and broad as itself, while bending him in reverence to Him who in the supreme sense is its Author. *Read no bad book.* It may be that some persons have to read bad books, as pathologists have to study the most loathsome diseases. It is scarcely probable that God calls you to be a moral pathologist. If He ever does, He will let you know by some sure sign. Meantime, avoid such books. They are a moral plague. You don't need to read them to find out what they are. By chance you may begin without knowing what one of them is; as you might find yourself in evil company without intending it. Then there is one thing to do—act at once, quit the book. Next to bad company,

bad books have wrought more moral evil than any other form of wickedness, leaving indelible stains on the imagination, weakening the conscience, distorting the will. There are authors for whom, and for their readers, it had been better, if the first edition of their works had been tied about their necks, and they had been cast into the depths of the sea.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CULTURE OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER: MORAL POWERS.

WE have thus taken a brief view of man's physical and mental constitution, in relation to the development of Christian character. We now come to study in the same connection his distinctively moral nature. We shall do so under the two heads of conscience and will. Conscience and will are improperly described as powers possessed by the man, as though he were separable from them. They are, properly speaking, the man himself viewed in his relation to the good and right, as knowing it and doing it. If we speak of them as faculties, we must disengage this phraseology from all mechanical or physical metaphors. Conscience is the man, knowing. Will is the man, doing.

A. Conscience.—1. ITS NATURE.—This subject has been keenly discussed in modern philosophy, since the time of Hobbes (1588-1679). The writer, who has been most distinguished for his vindication of the supremacy of conscience, as well as for the loftiness of his whole moral teaching, is the famous Bishop Butler (1692-1752).

We are not concerned here with such discussions. It is interesting to note, however, that the general ethical teaching of the idealist philosophy, represented by such a man as T. H. Green of Oxford, is in large agreement with the Biblical doctrine of man's moral nature. The leading passage in Scripture dealing with conscience is Rom. ii. 14, 15, the text, it will be remembered, of Butler's Three Sermons on Human Nature. That passage teaches us: *First*, that man has received a revelation of good, sufficient at all stages of his history to make him morally responsible. This revelation has come in different forms to men in different circumstances. To Gentiles, it appears as Nature, "the work of the law," *i.e.* a course of conduct in conformity with the divine will, being written in their hearts, as the Law of the Ten Words was on the tables of Stone. To the Jews, it appears in distinct articulate form as the Law, the will of God, directly and explicitly communicated in the Ten Words, and the moral code founded thereon. To all men, it has now appeared in Christ, in whom Nature and Law are alike fulfilled, and the highest moral good absolutely realised.

Second, that man is capable of seeing the good thus presented to him, and does, by his inmost nature, approve of it, and bind it upon himself as the highest law of his being. The conscience of man, *i.e.* the man himself, bears witness along

with Nature, Law, and Christ, *i.e.* along with the voice of God, acknowledges its authority, and claims the surrender of the whole man to it. This is the special application in ethics of the general Biblical doctrine of the constitution of human nature as made in the image of God. Man is in spiritual affinity with God, is meant for God, and has that in him which recognises and ratifies the Word of God, and makes him unsatisfied till this word is accepted and done. Conscience is thus not an independent authority, as though it could, apart from God, proclaim what is right, and legislate for man. Conscience summons man to listen to the voice of God speaking in the revelation of His will. Our obligation to do right is not to conscience, but to that God, to whose voice conscience calls us to give heed. Hence "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James iv. 17), not merely moral fault, or crime against conscience, but sin, offence against God to whom conscience is the witness in the heart of man. In the writings of some moralists, conscience seems almost to take the place of God. The Scriptures countenance no such exaggerated view of conscience. In them, conscience is, like faith, nothing in itself save the apprehension of God. This, however, if it deprives conscience of a fictitious, and indeed, impotent authority, bestows upon it another more real and mighty. Conscience is now to be looked upon as

bringing man into spiritual contact with God. It is the organ or faculty by which he becomes aware of the divine will for him, which is at the same time the law of his own highest well-being. Conscience, therefore, is supreme in man's moral nature. It claims obedience, not to itself, but to the absolute will, to which it is the testimony in man's consciousness.

No doubt, there are difficulties in defending the supremacy of conscience. Their gravity, however, is chiefly due to the acceptance of the intuitionist theory of conscience, as though this were the Biblical teaching. If conscience were in man an independent source of infallible moral judgments, the difficulties presented by the fact that the deliverances of conscience have varied from age to age and race to race, would be insuperable. If, however, we see in conscience simply man himself listening to the voice of God, we can understand at once how his power of hearing correctly may have varied in the process of his growth, and how, above all, if we hold the Christian doctrine of sin, the hearing organ itself may have become deteriorated and uncertain. Conscience, we repeat, is not the revelation of right. It is in man the organ of that revelation. Its supremacy is due to this its function, and is vindicated according as it discharges its function clearly and fully.

2. OUR DUTY TOWARD CONSCIENCE.—Possessed

of, or possessed by, a faculty so great in function and influence, we are bound to see that it obtains full scope for its exercise in the making of character and in the work of life. This will include three aspects of duty. (*a*) *To train it.*—Conscience has been involved in man's moral history. It has suffered through his sin. It shares in his restoration. Man redeemed, having the spring of new life in him, has as the goal of moral development conscience acting freely, swiftly, catching every whisper of the divine will, and instantly calling man to obedience. The aim of training, therefore, must be to heighten the faculty of conscience, making it more delicate in its susceptibility, more intent in its relation to God, more imperative in its relation to man.

The means at our disposal may be classified thus. First, the elementary conditions of moral life amid which man is born, which are gathered into the second table of the decalogue. Only as we observe these obvious rights of life, honour, property, reputation, with all the detailed obligations involved in them, can our conscience be clear, sound, and trustworthy. Any trifling with them, even in name of some lofty spirituality of life or teaching, produces disastrous results to the individual or community which tolerates such conduct. In the home, the school, the market, conscience gains the exercise which is to make it at once strong and delicate, sure in its discrimination, solemn and resolute in its

proclamations. Second, the literary expressions of the moral experience of men. History and biography, which tell of the growth, the triumph, the doom of nations, and unfold the drama of the human soul in struggle, attainment, or defeat, are magnificent instructors and trainers of conscience; and as such ought to be carefully used by all who seek moral strength. Fiction of the noblest kind has here a great field. The masters of this art have presented us with studies of virtues and vices, and of men in various circumstances of temptation, which are invaluable as exercises by which conscience may be trained in grasp of moral fact, fineness of discernment, and urgency of appeal. The tragedies of Shakespeare are the world's manual of ethics, illustrated with examples drawn by a master's hand, enforced by pity and terror, evoked by a master's touch. Scott, Thackeray, Dickens, George Eliot, with many of lesser name, have done work which, viewed as a training for conscience, ought to receive our careful study. Above all, the Bible, apart from any higher aspect, without raising any disputed point, is unquestionably the great moral educator of the race. "By the study of what other book," asks Huxley, who himself did not accept its highest teaching, "could children be so humanised?" The Bible is the touchstone of conscience. Conscience can only be maintained in truth and vigour according as it is

continually refreshed by earnest study of the ideal of manhood presented in Scripture, and principally in the character of Jesus Christ. Third, communion with God. Here we are passing from morality into religion. In fellowship with God our whole nature is raised to its highest power, and conscience shares in the illumination and transfiguration. In that direct spiritual intercommunication which exists between man and God through Jesus Christ, conscience is flooded with light. Man sees with growing clearness what the will of God for him is, and is strengthened to do it. It is not God's way with man to provide him with formulæ of conduct to suit every occasion. He desires a higher thing for man, viz. that, taught of God, he may see in any given situation the purpose of God which requires therein to be fulfilled. This result is not easily or speedily reached. There will be times of weakness, morbid tenderness and scrupulosity, harshness and narrowness. At such times we need to be patient with ourselves; and if we have reached a higher stage, to be most charitable towards those whose conscience is thus immature (1 Cor. viii. 7-13, x. 23-33; Rom. xv. 1, 2), till at last we and they reach a full age, and have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil (Heb. v. 14). Thus shall the testimony of conscience become an element in our assurance toward God (2 Cor. i. 12; 1 Peter iii. 21).

(*b*) *To obey it.*—Conscience thus informed and educated by the revealed will of God is the supreme authority in the realm of human life and action. It is a deliberate abandonment of the position for which God designed us to place our conscience in the hands of some "spiritual director," and take his utterances for the very voice of God. No doubt it is much easier thus to hand over the responsibility of our moral guidance to some infallible authority outside of ourselves. But we cannot do so without at the same time enfeebling our moral powers and lowering our moral tone. God meant us to bear responsibility. We cannot shirk it without becoming morally worse. Our duty is to train our conscience by the means open to us, so that it shall be a true and faithful witness to the will of God, and then to adhere unflinchingly to its declarations. The whole domain of life is to be brought under the sway of conscience. Actions prescribed by external authorities, *e.g.* the law of the land, are to be performed, not merely under constraint of common custom, but "for conscience sake" (Rom. xiii. 5). Actions for which there is no outward rule are to be brought under the scrutiny of conscience, and so performed "for conscience sake" (1 Cor. x. 25-29). Thus every deed should be penetrated by the conviction of conscience, and submitted to its arbitrament. No doubt a large part of life in Christianised society is regulated by

common agreement, so that on the surface there will not be much difference between the man of merely conventional morality and the man who makes a conscience of all he does. At the same time there will be great and important differences lying deeper. The man who obeys conscience will do the same habitual actions as others; but he will do them better, for he perceives the moral issues that belong to them. He will do things right and good which others would not think of, for he keeps his "soul's large window" cleansed from the dimness of selfish desire, and is ever ready to discern and follow the indications of God's will. The morality of mere conventional observances is self-satisfied, proud, and meagre. The morality of conscience is self-dissatisfied, humble, ever aspiring, ceaseless in its efforts after higher excellence. Conscience thus obeyed is "good" (Acts xxiii. 1; 1 Tim. i. 5, 19; Heb. xiii. 18; 1 Peter iii. 16, 21); not as though the man who thus obeys never does wrong, but because he, the man, the true self, seeks God's glory, will not rest in any attainment short of this, and will not lie still under the weight of unforgiven sin. It is "void of offence toward God and toward man" (Acts xxiv. 16); not because the man never grieves either God or man; but because the glory of God and the good of man constitute the aim of his life. It is "pure" (1 Tim. iii. 9; 2 Tim. i. 3), not because the man is sinless,

but because he has no doubleness of mind, and heartily seeks to order his life according to the will of God.

Disobedience to conscience is fraught with consequences disastrous to conscience itself. It may be difficult to destroy conscience, but it can be done. Conscience is part of our human nature, and in the vast injury done to human nature through sin, conscience suffers. In this process of injury we observe three steps. *Defilement.* 1 Cor. viii. 7; Titus i. 15. A man disregards the testimony of conscience, and straightway his whole moral nature suffers from the taint of sin. His conscience does not escape. Its perception of moral distinctions has become obscured, it speaks weakly and uncertainly, and even commits grievous errors. His mind and conscience, if he persevere, will become defiled. *Searing.* 1 Tim. iv. 2. As a nerve may be deadened by burning, so conscience, by persistence in known evil, may become reduced to dumbness and impotency. A man may sin till he has an evil liberty in sinning. It is said of him "he has no conscience." It is profoundly true. Eyes has he, but he sees not, and none of the awful beauty of goodness is perceptible by him. Ears has he, but he hears not, and no voice from the eternal region of right ever reaches him. *Perversion.* Matt. vi. 23. A man may so persistently substitute his own will for God's will, that

at length he comes to regard his own will as God's will. His whole nature is thus perverted, turned toward self in the belief and conviction that this is God. In this wheeling of the soul away from the light conscience takes part. It speaks, but its judgments are absolute perversions of truth. The light that is in him is darkness, and how great is that darkness! The annals of the Papacy present instances of this on a grand scale. The records of individual lives, as they are read by the eye of God, present, it cannot be doubted, many such cases, in which sin has procured this awful penalty. Let such a fate serve as warning, and send us back, with the awe of God upon our souls, to the path of constant obedience.

(*c*) *To vindicate it.*—Hitherto we have looked at conscience as it appears in the individual man, but man himself cannot properly be considered merely as an individual. He must be considered in his relations to his fellows, living among them, modified and influenced by them, finding his own highest welfare in ends which include their welfare also. The community in which he lives, therefore, may be regarded as a spiritual unity, almost as a personality. It has a moral goal, a moral history, and a moral faculty. There is such a thing as "the public conscience," the conscience not merely of this man or that, but of the body of men living together as a moral organism. The public con-

science, like that of the individual, witnesses on behalf of the right and good. It furnishes the spring and motive of obedience to the Law of the State, as an expression of the mind of God. Its main operation, however, lies in the region of conduct beyond the reach of legal enactment and penalty. There are great moral evils which lie in large measure beyond the scope of law. Their suppression or control must lie in the last resort with the conscience of the community. No Act of Parliament can make the country sober; but the conscience of the community, awake, enlightened, active, in all ranks and classes could do it. No legislation can cleanse Scotland of the taint of impurity which makes our domestic life so dismal, and often so tragic; but the public conscience, operative in every social circle and in every home, could do it.

Here, therefore, lies the duty of every Christian man, woman, and child, having informed the individual conscience by the revealed will of God, to make known its testimony in the community, and thus to educate, enlighten, and quicken the conscience of the community, elevating its standard, and securing the certainty and soundness of its judgments. Let every member of the community make up his mind upon such moral questions as those mentioned above, and bring his mind to bear on all persons within his reach, and upon the community

at large, and so add the weight of his character and influence to the existing sum of moral sentiment and judgment. As long as alcoholic excess is regarded as indifferent, almost creditable, so long drunkenness will be our national vice. As long as impurity is condoned, excused, or passed over lightly as a "mistake," so long will the blot of prevailing illegitimacy stain our statistics, and the foul stream of uncleanness roll on through crowded slum and sequestered country hamlet. As long, too, as those who do regard drunkenness and impurity as sinful, refrain from uttering their voice regarding these evils, and fail to stimulate public feeling with respect to them, and neglect necessary counsel and warning to their children and others under their influence, so long will these evils prevail among us, and those who thus neglect their duty as Christians incur personal responsibility for them. The reward of such testimony against moral evil has sometimes been death. A classic instance is that of the hermit Telemachus who died in the arena of the Colisæum, and by his death stopped for ever the cruelty of the gladiatorial games. "One habitual crime at least was wiped from the earth by the self-devotion of one humble, obscure, almost nameless man."[1] Often the reward has been misunderstanding, disappointment, and

[1] Story exquisitely told in Miss Younge's "Book of Golden Deeds."

shame; but whatever it be, the path of duty is plain, and must be trodden by all who will be true to God and His light. Failure in fidelity injures the cause of righteousness. It also injures our own souls. We cannot be silent in presence of moral wrong, without having our moral judgment weakened, our standard lowered, our susceptibilities blunted. Fidelity is itself noblest service to God and man, even though our witness-bearing should not end, in our lifetime at least, in suppression of the wrong against which we testify. Here we touch on mysteries. In the spirit of Christ and in fellowship with Him, His faithful people "bear the sin of many, and make intercession for the transgressors." The sins of the nation press upon their spirits. They bear the burden to God in agony of supplication. Such sufferers, disappointed, beaten, crucified, are, in a profounder sense than that in which the phrase is applied to political leaders, "the saviours of their country." God hears them, and for their sakes even Sodom will have its day of grace lengthened out.

B. Will.—If, in speaking of Conscience, we were afraid to use the term "faculty," lest it should be supposed that it was in any sense separable from the man himself, we may well be much more reluctant to apply it to Will. Here we are not dealing with anything that belongs to man, in the sense in which arms and legs, or even memory and

imagination, belong to him. In studying the will we are studying the man. The will is the man. From the first page in which we began this review of human nature in relation to the culture of character, we have been moving from the circumference to the centre. Now we have reached it, and are to consider how the will of man operates in the cultivation of Christian character.

1. THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL.—This subject is one of the most difficult in the whole round of philosophy or theology, and it has been made the battle ground of many controversies. Its difficulties have been increased, however, by the one-sided views of freedom which conflicting theories have adopted. The commonest view of freedom to be found, both in theory and practice, is that which is technically called "liberty of indifference," and is practically known as liberty to "do as you please." In this form it becomes an object of ambition to many young men and women, whose moral education, however, has scarcely begun till they learn that true freedom is not this, but something quite different.

Three elements may be distinguished in the full conception of freedom :—

(*a*) *Self-determination.*—In any action there are certain motives, or objects prompting to the performance of the action. One theory maintains that we are always and necessarily determined in action

by the motives that are presented to us. Another theory claims that we are free to reject even the strongest motives, and to act without the solicitation of any motive whatever. In point of fact, however, no outward object can move us, till it is taken within the sphere of our conscious life, and is discerned as a means of attaining some end which we consider as good, and ministering to what we conceive as our welfare. The animal is presumably moved, for instance, to eat by presentation of some object fitted to satisfy hunger, without any reference to a Self. Man, however, is moved by the ideal of self-satisfaction obtainable through eating. Eating is, in him, not mere instinctive movement; it is the action of a Self, aiming at self-realisation. He is, therefore, not determined by objects outside of himself. Neither is he indetermined, his will moving, as it were, *in vacuo*. He is Self-determined. The action originates in and is due to the activity of a Self, or Personality. All action, therefore, which a self-conscious being performs, is *his* action. It is his offspring, a portion of his moral being. We act, and the resultant action is ours. We cannot rid ourselves of responsibility for it. Very often we would willingly do so, and relieve ourselves of moral accountability by pointing out that the action was rendered necessary by circumstances, or by some strange solicitation, or some inherent weakness transmitted from a remote past through a line

of ancestors. In fact, however, we could not have acted at all, save as there was reference in the motive to a Self, which we are, and by whose decision the action is performed.

The motive may have come to us from the outside; it could not move us till it was taken inside, and made an element in our ideal of what is good for us. When we act, therefore, whatever the prompting may be, whencesoever it may have arisen, and howsoever strong it may be, we act in name and by the power of the Self or Personality, which we are. Medical science and criminal law necessarily, to a large extent, discount this aspect of accountability, and the treatment of criminals will be profoundly modified by the scientific doctrine of heredity. In our judgments of one another, also, we are bound in charity to restrain our condemnation by remembering the nature of the solicitations to evil that have beset any individual sinner. But in judging ourselves, we are never to allow any smattering of scientific knowledge to delude us into believing that we are not accountable for our actions. In dealing with the sunken and degraded also, we will be doing them no good if we condone their evil by a theory which denies to them capacity of repentance and reformation. We have still to charge upon them their actions as their own. This will lead them into conviction of sin. It will at the same time point the way of deliverance. They

are not mere products of circumstances. They are personalities, and may rise above circumstances, in virtue of that very power by which they have degraded themselves. Christianity differs from the ethics of materialism at once in the severity and in the hopefulness of its view of man. It lays upon man the burden of his guilt, and at the same time preaches to him the hope of deliverance; and it does both, because it clings to the conception, itself justified by the ripest philosophy of the day—of man as a Self, Self-determined and responsible, in all his actions.

(*b*) *Moral Choice.*—To man thus standing at the centre of his moral life, determining its issues, there is revealed, as we saw in considering Rom. ii. 14, 15 (*see* above, p. 104), the will of God, progressively, through nature, law, and Christ. To this revelation conscience bears witness; testifying that it is laid as an obligation upon a being, morally constituted as man is, to do this will, and choose it as the supreme regulative principle of his life; promising, at the same time, that if he will do this, he shall attain to the fulness of his own nature.

In the nature of the case, therefore, there comes in every moral history a period of crisis in which the great decision must be made, and the man must identify himself with the supreme good and right, or else decline to do so. In this position the man stands alone. Before him are the two

ways. He, a personal being, self-determining, and responsible, must choose. Neither God nor man can fix his choice for him. In what intellectual form, or under what circumstances this choice will present itself to any individual man, will vary according to differences of age, rank, descent, education, occupation. Each individual history has something in it unique. Fundamentally, however, the alternative lies between God and the world, between Christ and self. With profound insight the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews thus represents the decision of Moses, as lying between "the pleasures of sin" and "the reproach of Christ" (Heb. xi. 24-26). In all the Bible biographies we see the same issue presented. We read it in the leading characters of secular history. It belongs to every individual man. Nothing can exceed the solemnity of this thought.

The question is grievously complicated by the sinful bias of our nature. We could imagine a moral development in which this crisis was passed through simply, without any strain put upon the will. The man would see the good, and forthwith make himself one with it, clearly discerning that it was at once an obligation binding on him, and the condition of his own welfare. In fact, however, men do not invariably and easily make this decision. The first instinct is to decline to make this decision. The prevailing tendency is to oppose

to the supremacy of the will of God the independence of self-will. The prevailing delusion is that this independence constitutes freedom, that by surrendering this independence a man, in some sort, injures himself, and deprives himself of his rights. Whereas the truth is, that in refusing to identify himself with the will of God, which is the very law of his well-being, a man does himself deadly injury, and brings himself into bondage. Self-will is not freedom; it is servitude of a peculiarly galling nature. The will, declining to accept the will of God, loses its freedom, and becomes the slave of external solicitations. It may often be noted that a man has a weak will, weak in respect to good, incapable of steadfast pursuit of righteousness, while the same man has a strong will toward evil. That is to say, he has rejected the will of God, which, being accepted, would endow him with freedom and strength; and, in consequence, his will power has been submerged by strong desires and passions, and acts only towards their gratification. Young men ought to understand that, when they say or think, that the life of obedience to God is poor-spirited and unmanly, while the life of self-gratification is gallant and free, they are exactly reversing the true estimate of things. That life is heroic, noble, and in the highest sense manly, which is under the dominion of Christ. That life is poor, empty, and unworthy of man's true

dignity which is under no guidance but that of self-will.

(*c*) *Self-surrender.*—We now see wherein true freedom consists. It does not lie in mere arbitrariness of will. It is reached through self-surrender. It consists in the identity of man's will with God's will. When man's will has thus been yielded to God, it is for the first time free and strong, because now it wills that which is the highest good for man. The greatest proof and illustration are to be found in Christ. No one will question His complete manhood, His entire and glorious strength of character; yet we see how He received His will, not as an independent power to be grasped at, but as an independence to be always and wholly yielded up (John iv. 34; v. 30; vi. 38). The outcome of His redemptive work, moreover, is viewed in the New Testament as the freedom of man, a freedom which consists in emancipation from self-will, and harmony with the will of God, a freedom which, as it is maintained through perpetual surrender, issues in a splendid fixity which renders any other choice than that of the will of God impossible (John viii. 31, 32; Rom. viii. 21; 2 Cor. iii. 17; 1 Peter ii. 16). A man's true liberty is not inconsistent with his being the bond slave of Christ, but is in truth only attained through his thus wholly yielding himself to Christ. This thought finds expression in Tennyson's sublime invocation introductory to

his great poem "In Memoriam," where he attributes to Christ the perfect ideal of manhood, and points out how we may become assimilated to it.

> "Thou seemest human and divine,
> The highest, holiest, manhood thou :
> Our wills are ours we know not how ;
> Our wills are ours to make them thine."

2. THE TRAINING OF THE WILL.—Such being the true idea of freedom of will and strength of character, our aim must be to train our wills in steady and habitual concentration upon the will of God, so that we may will to do God's will strenuously, resolutely, in complete mastery over every opposing solicitation. A most important part of this training, no doubt, belongs to the period when we are integral parts of the home. At this stage parents are under most solemn obligation to train the wills of their children. In the home children ought to be taught by precept, and above all, by example, that self-indulgence is not the highest good, and that self-denial is the path to true greatness and happiness. Soon, however, the training passes into our own hands. Here we have to contend with a great evil. There is, as it were, a subtle and unexpressed consciousness of the impending crisis, spoken of above, when the alternative of God and the world, Christ and self, presents itself to the will, with a persistent desire to evade the necessity of choice. Many who

would be averse to choosing the evil, employ, with instinctive cunning, every artifice to avoid having to choose at all. They will, for instance, submit to all kinds of general exhortation ; but will shrink from and resent anything like dealing at close quarters. Let them understand that Indecision is the worst kind of Decision. There is more hope for those who have clearly decided for Self, than for those who decline to decide for Christ. The necessity of deciding in one direction or the other is well brought out in Browning's poem of "The Statue and the Bust." Here we have the story of two persons who refrained from committing a sin, not from any sense of its sinfulness, or any distinct choice of the right, but simply from want of resolution, what in Scotland we call *fecklessness*. This the poet regards, not as a virtue, but actually as a worse evil than the commission of the sin would have been :

> "The sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
> Is, the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
> Tho' the end in sight was a vice, I say."

The undecided man becomes emasculated. His will dissolves into a kind of pulp. He is henceforth good for nothing, a moral waste, which even the Devil must despise!

All means, therefore, must be used to strengthen the will, *i.e.* to deliver it from the ignominy of irresolution, and the caprice of self-assertion, and

train it to a ready and determined acceptance and performance of the will of God. Among these, which in the nature of the case vary from one individual to another, may be mentioned specially:

(*a*) *Submission to all constituted authority.*—This may be urged as a duty from various points of view (Rom. xiii. 1-5; Titus iii. 1; 1 Peter ii. 13-18; v. 5; Heb. xiii. 17). But the valuable effect of such submission as a discipline for the will ought not to be overlooked. Young men find the period in which they are passing beyond the stage of childhood, and yet remain under the family roof, often very trying. The restraints of parental authority they feel to be irksome. Painful scenes are apt to take place; sometimes ending in rupture, the young man flinging off the restraints altogether, and, being now able to support himself, leaving home for the sweets of liberty. Let it be granted that the situation is in itself difficult, that parents are not always wise, and are apt to forget that their sons are no longer children. Yet let young men be well assured that the self-mastery gained by voluntary submission is worth all the pains, and that the sweets of liberty are dearly bought by the forfeiture of a most valuable and much needed training in self-surrender. Similarly in the church, office-bearers and Christian workers are often persuaded that they have plans wiser than those adopted

by majorities in courts or societies. They feel it irksome to submit to conditions thus imposed on them; and they permit themselves to use rude and violent language, or even to withdraw altogether from the work. Here also it may be freely admitted that the individual is often right, and the majority wrong. None the less, submission is better than self-assertion; better in the long run for the work, and better in any case for the individual as an exercise in self-control.

(*b*) *Prompt performance of every duty to which conscience bears witness.*—Procrastination is the thief of time; but it steals more than time. It steals will power. By every duty postponed in wantonness or idleness, the will is weakened. Its action, in higher things, becomes enfeebled, and the whole Christian life suffers. Those whose lives are not regulated by the factory or school bell need to be specially careful. Students, ministers, and professional men generally, need to see to it that the absence of a mechanical regulation of their life is compensated for by the more energetic inward control.

(*c*) *Gymnastic exercises.*—It is true that the best means of training lie in the ordinary incidents of life, as these emerge day by day. But we ought not to despise special means, devised as gymnastic exercises, for the training and strengthening of the will. It is well known that Romanism has been

skilful in elaborating such exercises, till in the system of Jesuitism the system has reached a marvellous completeness. The danger here is that what began as healthy exercise has become legal bondage; and the result has been that the will instead of being strengthened has been crushed. In the typical Jesuit, his will has been extinguished, and has been replaced by a non-moral habit of obedience to external authority. The Scriptures, however, recognise three leading forms of exercise, and it will be a pity if our recoil from Romanism should lead us to neglect them. These are Fasting, Alms-giving, and Prayer (Matt. vi. 1-18). These are duties which are enjoined from other points of view; but they serve also as means of training the will, leading it to identification with the will of God, and emancipation from and mastery over the instincts, passions, and powers of human nature. Fasting, including all kinds of restraint in food and drink, aids the mastery of the will over physical demands. Alms-giving, including every form of Christian liberality, aids the mastery of the will over the instincts of accumulation. Prayer, including all ordinances of worship, aids the mastery of the will over the whole nature, as it tends, through its sinful bias, to turn away from God. Regularity in the practice of these exercises will produce that ease and steadiness in the operation of the

will, which ought to mark the progressive development of Christian character.

3. THE OPERATION OF THE WILL.—The aim of the will in the culture of Christian character is clear. It is to realise in man as an individual, and in the whole field of his life, the will of God as supreme; or, in other words, to vindicate the sovereignty of Christ in man. As that is progressively achieved, the character grows towards its goal of Christlikeness. In studying the operation of the will, we observe: (*a*) *The material.*—In general, the material with which will has to work is human nature, in its material, mental and moral aspects, a brief survey of which has been taken above. This material, however, is not the same in each individual specimen of the race, else the work of will would tend to be mechanical, and the product of its operation would vary no more than the product of a number of machines working up in the same way the same raw material. In fact, it differs infinitely from man to man. No two specimens of the race are entirely alike. The differences, therefore, defy enumeration. Some broad divisions, however, may be traced. In the first place, there are differences due to special constitution. *First* —Sex. Obviously a whole world of differences, physical, mental, and moral, are conjured up by this word; and a whole volume devoted to the subject would probably leave each sex in some

considerable degree unsatisfied with the treatment. Suffice it to say that the sexes have each their weaknesses, their points of strength, their special adaptabilities, with all of which will has to reckon in the making of character. *Second*—Temperament. Each individual has a peculiar temperament, or, as it has been called, "fundamental mood," which determines the special aspect that the character will present as it is wrought up by the will. It is usual to give a classification of four temperaments, which probably corresponds roughly with the facts, though it is entirely unscientific, and cannot be applied in any abstract way in the study of special cases.

The *phlegmatic* temperament has its fundamental mood in rest or stability; its prevailing temptation in insensibility and sloth. The *sanguine* temperament has its fundamental mood in ready susceptibility and openness to impressions from without: its prevailing temptation in flightiness and superficiality. The *melancholic* temperament has its fundamental mood in solitary withdrawal into one's self; its prevailing temptation, in moodiness, unpractical dreaming, and useless sorrow. The *choleric* temperament has its fundamental mood in impulsive energy, eager for employment in the world around; its prevailing temptation in obstinacy, narrowness, and bad temper. Plainly the task of will is endlessly varied by such dis-

tinctions. *Third*—Talent. Individuals vary in their special gifts. These form the determining elements in the special work the individual undertakes, and in most important ways mould the life he is to live. The will has a mighty task in the control and consecration of such gifts and abilities, a task which varies according to the special powers of mind or body.

In the second place, there are wide differences, due to special circumstances, all of which demand peculiar treatment. Such are: *Age.* It is obviously impossible to apply the same treatment to the child as to the man, or expect the same results from the one as from the other. The will has a distinct task and a distinct mode of working in each case, and the product will also vary. There is a type of Christian character appropriate to the child, and there is a type appropriate to the man. *Rank.* The same opportunities do not belong to the poor man as to the rich; the same work does not fall to him to do. Each, therefore, has special lines of duty to follow, and in each special virtues are called for. *Calling.* Each career, handicraft, trade, or profession makes necessary special exercise of powers, affords special aspects of self-denial, and provides special forms of temptation, all of which require special attention from the will.

These differences, therefore, cause the operation of will to vary in each individual. Hence

the moral life loses all suspicion of dreariness or monotony. The study of character in others, the culture of character in ourselves, becomes profoundly interesting. *Ennui* is impossible to the man who understands his business in the culture of his own character. His moral life unfolds itself to him as a history wherein there are victories and defeats, disappointments and achievements that rival, and indeed excel, in thrilling interest any that are recorded in fiction.

This also makes it impossible for one man to apply any set of rules to another, and teaches moderation in judgment and charity in opinion. In no case do we know precisely the material which the will had before it. Therefore we cannot judge what means are best, how long the process may take, or through what stages it may have to pass. Let the parable of the seed growing secretly teach us wisdom in our estimate of ourselves and of others (Mark iv. 26-29).

These differences, however, are not differences of fundamental type of character. The one supreme type is Christ. This unity, however, is not a bare hard identity, a kind of Procrustes bed. Rather is it the unity of life, which admits of differences, and is indeed their perfect harmony. We are required to "be perfect"; but the perfection of one is not the perfection of another, while in both it is Christlikeness. In Christ we live, and

to Christ we grow. Yet we all remain ourselves, with distinct individuality, gaining, not losing, through our relation to Christ, the fulness of our personal being, as it is said, "Ye are complete in Him" (Col. ii. 10).

(*b*) *The Process.*—Infinitely varied as the operations of the will must be in the formation of character, there are three steps which are clearly distinguishable, and stand in closest relations to one another.

First.—The Act. An object comes within the sphere of man's conscious life. His will is now summoned to action. It may either accept this object, and make it one of the modes in which the Self seeks the ideal good, or it may reject the object, and cast it out of the line of the man's moral advance. In this act, accordingly, the will puts forth its energy. This act manifests the Self. Action, therefore, is most momentous. There have been historic actions, which involved tremendous issues, as when Louis XIV. signed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. In reality each action we perform has endless consequences, as it passes into and determines the course of our moral life.

Second.—The Habit. Acts repeated link themselves into a chain of habit, in which the distinct and separate activity of the will tends to become ever more completely submerged in the dominance of custom, while yet the habit as a whole

is the work of will, and implies responsibility. A man may commit a sin which is simply an accident in a habit formed long ago, and scarcely required a specific act of will to bring it about; yet for that sin the man is responsible, seeing that it may be traced back to original initiative of his will. There is nothing more tragic in moral history than the ease with which repeated acts grow into habits whose iron weight shall make life a burden, and deliverance all but impossible. Alcoholic excess presents an obvious illustration, but the process is not confined to sins of the body. It goes on with even greater subtlety, rapidity, and power in sins more refined in quality. Sins of imagination tend to become readily habitual, and are hard to overcome. Untruthfulness may become a vice in those who recognise and even aspire after a high type of spiritual experience. No man is safe, unless he watch with scrupulous care and most jealous inspection the transition of act into habit.

Third.—Character. Acts and habits are the fibre out of which the vesture of character is woven. This is the final issue of the operations of will.

Here then we have a solemn sequence, Acts, Habits, Character. Now, however, we have to add a fact even more significant. Not only does will make character; but character fixes will. This

reaction of character upon will increases in incalculable degree the movement of the soul upward or downward. Behind the will there gathers the whole force of a character which will has been developing, either in union with the highest good or in opposition to it. Thus the will is constrained to act in a definite direction by a force it has itself stored up, and to which it has itself given a certain tendency. The most conspicuous Biblical example is that of Pharaoh, whose character thus hardened his heart, and determined his will to evil, so that his being hardened was at once his own doing and the judgment of God upon him. In literature, we have Macbeth, who is caught in the meshes of his own action, and has his future determined by his past. In the life of every individual, as his moral history proceeds, it becomes more and more true that the act is the embodiment of the character, so that, observing the conduct, we can read the character, or, knowing the character, we can predict the conduct. Let young men and women well understand that moral life is not the sphere of caprice, that here also law bears sway. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Sow self-will, and you will reap ultimate hardening in antagonism to God and goodness.

(*c*) *The Power.*—This study of character will have failed altogether if it has not brought out

the twofold aspect of the development of the Christian type. In the first two chapters we sought to discern the divine aspect. Since then we have been dwelling on the human. Let us now bring them both together. Christian character is at one and the same time the work of will and the work of grace. It is God's work; yet it is not wrought apart from man or against his will. It is man's work; yet it is not wrought without God—would be a miserable failure without Him. Philosophically or theologically, it is very difficult to combine these aspects in one view or statement. As matter of experience or moral teaching, the matter is plain enough. No unsophisticated mind is ever perplexed by hearing that the power is all of God, while at the same time the end will never be reached unless he put forth all the energy of his will to reach it. This may be called a paradox, but it is one whose solution lies in life, not in theory. Christ is the source of Christian character. He tells us what it is. We see it perfectly realised in Him. By His redeeming work, it has been made a possibility for us. By His indwelling through the Spirit we also are enabled to reach it.

Two things, therefore, we have to do. *First.*—To appropriate the divine power thus stored up in Christ, and communicated by the Spirit. We do this mainly in actings of soul toward Christ.

(*a*) Receiving Him (John i. 12). He is in us our life (Col. iii. 3). Without Him we can do nothing (John xv. 5). (*b*) Abiding in Him (John xv. 4-7). We are to maintain this attitude towards Him of constant receptivity so that His life and power may be poured into us. (*c*) Beholding Him (2 Cor. iii. 18). He is the revelation of God, the revelation of holiness. We are transfigured by beholding. If we fulfil these conditions, the power of God which Christ has and is becomes ours, and is available for our growth in Christ-likeness. Thus He of God is made unto us sanctification (1 Cor. i. 30).

Second.—To set to work ourselves in the name of Christ, and in dependence on His Spirit. The intensity of our personal responsibility, and the abundance of our resources are expressed in such passages as Phil. ii. 12, 13; and 2 Peter i. 3-7. We can work out, only because God works in. We can add on our part diligence, only because we are partakers of the divine nature. Similarly because God graciously works in us, therefore we must work out our salvation; and because we have been made partakers of so mighty a privilege, we must see to it that no diligence is lacking on our part. By sparing no pains on this business of cultivating the Christian character, not only are we furthering our own highest welfare, but we are rendering noblest service to our fellow-men. Not

by finished products, if such there were, would men be so much benefited, as they are by characters, which, though imperfect, "are being changed." We may never do any outstanding deed for the amelioration of the race; but if we have lived to be light and strength to some struggling soul, we shall not have lived in vain. There is no higher honour than to have said of us the words, which Pompilia spoke regarding her friend, as she passed into the eternal day:—

> "Through such souls alone
> God, stooping, shows sufficient of His light
> For us i' the dark to rise by; and I rise."

Then, when the process of discipline is ended, our imperfections shall fall from us, and we shall reach the goal. We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

PART II

THE MANIFESTATION OF CHARACTER

THE MANIFESTATION OF CHARACTER.

INTRODUCTION.

CHARACTER AND CONDUCT.

In the foregoing pages, we have been studying the making of Character. We are now to follow some of its manifestations. Christian Character manifests itself in Conduct. As Christians, we are to perform the ordinary duties of morality, with at least the scrupulous care of those who claim to be moral without being religious, and with a freedom and royal amplitude of conception all our own. We are to act as Christians in circumstances and situations where a conventional or legal morality would have no commands to give. We are to show, in difficult or unusual positions, that the Christian Character draws direction and inspiration from hidden sources of wisdom and power. The manifestation of Character, accordingly, cannot be reduced to a system. Christian Conduct cannot be completely exhibited in a code. No exhaustive list of Christian duties and virtues can be provided.

We may observe, however, certain well-defined spheres of human action, and we may trace in

outline the manifestation of Christian Character in each of them. This attempt we proceed now to make.

Before doing so, however, let us note that we cannot in any abstract way separate the making from the manifestation of Character. Through its manifestations in conduct, Character is being formed within us. Christian Character cannot be attained when it is made the sole end in view. Our first all-absorbing business as Christians is to do the will of God. We are not to obey God for the sake of the advantage, even the spiritual advantage, which obedience may bring. We are to obey Him under the constraint of redeeming love. Then as we lose ourselves in His service, our Character shall ripen to a maturity, the more lovely that it is unconscious. "I am afraid," said a lady to Mr Wilberforce, "you are so busy about those slaves that you are neglecting your own soul." "True, madam," he replied, "I had quite forgotten that I have one." The paradox of Christianity applies to the making of Character. He that saveth his life shall lose it. He that loseth his life shall keep it for results he had not dared to anticipate.

CHAPTER I.

THE FAMILY.

THE importance of the family in the moral and spiritual development of the race cannot be overestimated. Here individual character is cradled and nourished. Important as that critical period no doubt is, in which transition is made from the irresponsibility of childhood, to the responsibility and self-consciousness of manhood, we cannot neglect the period which precedes it, or fail to consider how the early home life profoundly affects for weal or woe, the man's after history. Here disposition gets a bias which it will scarcely afterwards lose. Here habits are formed which become a second nature, and are the very stuff out of which character is made. Here ideas are fixed in the mind, and convictions are rooted in the heart, which will determine the whole subsequent career. Countless instances occur in biography to illustrate the power of home influence, especially as that is concentrated in the person of the mother. The names of Augustine, John Newton, Samuel Johnson, the Wesleys, President

Garfield, and many others, will readily be recalled. The commonest observation will supply striking instances of lives which have been shaped, and characters which have been moulded, by the circumstances and moral atmosphere of the home. A good home is a priceless privilege, and exerts even upon those who have long been strangers to its happiness and virtue an all but irresistible influence. From the far country many a prodigal has been brought back to God by memories of home. A bad home is an unspeakable loss, depriving its unhappy members of that inheritance of joyful, pathetic, and ennobling recollection, which was their birthright.

The family, being thus so profoundly influential in the formation of character, has value for the nation beyond comparison with mere material resources. The vigour and the decay of a people are alike to be traced to the homes out of which men and women pass to the duties of citizenship. This fact must be fully recognised in all political or educational or economic schemes. Theories which tamper with the family as a sacred and inviolable institution are condemned by this test, and all attempts to realise them are foredoomed to failure. The wealth of the State lies in the character of its citizens; and character depends on the sanctity of the home. Break up the home, under any pretext whatever, and the ruin of the

State is inevitable. Romanism, by proclaiming the religious superiority of virginity and celibacy over the married state, has struck a blow at the family, whose disastrous moral consequences the elevation of matrimony into a sacrament has failed to avert. Secularism by declaring that marriage ought to be dissoluble at the will of the parties contracting it, directly attacks the family, and resolves Society into the anarchic elements of individual desire. Social reform must find its starting-point, and its continual guide in the family. Even in respect to those children which result from wrecked and ruined homes, the only possible treatment is to gather them into institutions which shall, as closely as possible, resemble natural homes, and to pass them as soon as possible out of such institutions into real homes, where they may receive something of the affection and nurture of children.

The family is, moreover, the nursery not only of the State, but also of the Christian Church. Family religion is the root and spring of all religion. From Christian families, permeated by the Spirit of Christ, the Church draws her most reliable and most useful members. In Christian families, exhibiting the influence of Christ in the domestic life, the Church has found her best witnesses, and most perfect instruments. The power of Christianity was first seen in its effect

on family life. Purifying the relations of the sexes, making close and tender the marriage bond, emancipating women from a bondage none the less degrading because it was decked with luxury, setting a divine seal on the loveliness and innocence of little children, Christianity demonstrated to the pagan world its redemptive power; and this power it exhibits still, wherever the Gospel is proclaimed throughout heathen lands. Even in our own land, the family remains unrivalled as an evangelistic agency. A well ordered Christian home, where sobriety, love, and cheerfulness reign, where God is honoured both in sunshine and in sorrow, is a demonstration of the truth of Christianity, which all can understand, and none will gainsay, and forms by its very presence a constant and powerful attraction to Christ. Family life, then, which has such important results for the individual, for Society, and for the Church, must be maintained in its purity, and must be regulated according to the mind of Christ. We proceed, therefore, to consider the various relations within the family, and to note briefly the duties belonging to each of them.

1. **Husband and Wife.**—Marriage is the union of two persons, man and woman, in full and intimate fellowship of the whole nature.

For this union, human nature has been fitted by the constitution it has received from the hand of

God; and in it human nature finds the best conditions under which to grow to its highest moral and spiritual maturity (Gen. i. 27; ii. 24; Matt. xix. 4, 5).

Marriage is, accordingly, essentially monogamic and indissoluble. It is true that polygamy was permitted under the Mosaic law; but it is indicated in many ways that this practice comes short of the ideal of marriage. Polygamy is traced to the Cainites (Gen. iv. 19); and it is placed under various restrictions tending to lessen the hardships which result from it; *e.g.* Lev. xviii. 18; Ex. xxi. 10; Deut. xxi. 15-17. The marriage relationship is also described with so high an appreciation of its spiritual value, that monogamy is evidently intended to be its sole true form. This appears particularly in the book of Proverbs, which represents specially the human and social side of the religion of Israel, *e.g.* ii. 16-19; xix. 14; xii. 4; xviii. 22; xxxi. 10-30; together with such passages as condemn breakers of the marriage vow, to be found in the second, fifth, sixth and seventh chapters. In the New Testament, such practices as had been tolerated by the Mosaic code, fall away, and marriage stands forth as the relation of union between one man and one woman, so unique that its creation *ipso facto* dissolves, for the individuals contracting it, the ties which bind them to the homes they leave (Ephes. v. 31).

It is important to dwell on the high Christian ideal of marriage, as a union which has much more

in view than the mere happiness of the individuals entering into it. Very much of the modern attack upon marriage proceeds on the view that it is merely an arrangement under which those feelings, which are comprehended in the passion of love, may be gratified. It follows that, if this be all marriage is intended to do, it need not be maintained beyond the period during which these feelings last. This is actually advanced by some writers upon the subject, and is supported in the treatment of love and marriage to be found in many novels of the day. Such a relaxation of the marriage bond is fraught with consequences of direst evil. It would impair the moral influences which husbands and wives ought to exert upon one another. It would diminish the sense alike of parental responsibility and filial reverence. The moral education of children would be impossible; and the welfare, nay, the very existence of society would be imperilled. Let the marriage union be conceived in the highest aspect, as designed to serve nobler ends than gratification of desire, and as being the appointed means for the perfecting of character in the individual and in the race; and it will be seen that it is indissoluble, save for such sins and crimes as make impossible the spiritual fellowship in which it essentially consists (Matt. xix. 6-9; 1 Cor. vii. 15).

Entrance upon a union thus absolutely unique

in closeness and sanctity, which is the earthly emblem of the union between Christ and His Church (Ephes. v. 23-27, 29, 30), is thus the gravest step in the individual life and ought not to be taken without the most careful, reverent, and prayerful consideration of all the elements that enter into the case. Habits of speech or behaviour which tend to form in the mind none but foolish and frivolous ideas in connection with marriage, cannot be too strongly condemned. Many unhappy marriages and much moral evil in society are to be traced to low ideals of the married state and to consequent haste and inconsiderateness in entering upon it. The following are some of the barriers, which, when they are discovered to exist, ought to prohibit marriage. *The existence of certain forms of physical and mental disease:* It is the plain duty of fathers and mothers to instruct their children upon such points, lest unwittingly a young man or maiden might be led into a union entailing misery to generations yet unborn. *The existence of wide incongruities of age, rank, or creed:* Where such exist, there is a *prima facie* objection to the marriage, which experience largely corroborates. Such unions as those of an aged man with a very young woman, of a person moving in very high, wealthy circles with one of the humbler classes (though the prevalence of culture among all classes will, it is to be hoped, one day extinguish this type

of incongruity), of Roman Catholic and Protestant, Christian and Jew, present no reasonable prospect of mutual peace and benefit. *The pressure of prior duty:* Some of the noblest men and women have found themselves led to the celibate life through the claims of aged or infirm persons dependent upon them for comfort or the means of subsistence. Marriage selfishly formed in defiance of such claims must lack much of the blessing of God. *The absence of adequate means:* No man has a right to invite a woman to enter with him into this union, if he has no reasonable prospect of maintenance for more than one. It is to be observed, however, that there is a distinction between prudence and pride. Men, who abstain from marriage in order that they may have more money to spend on the luxuries supposed to belong to their social rank, and women, who refuse marriage because in the home offered them they will have fewer indulgences than they have been accustomed to, are sinning against Nature and against God. The love which cannot make sacrifices is not worthy of the name. Suppose, however, that such barriers as those mentioned do exist, let it be well understood that this, too, is the will of God. The Divine Mind that shapes our course has thus planned the life; and it shall fail of no noble quality in the case of those who accept the will of God with simple and uncomplaining surrender. Marriage is

no doubt the normal condition of life ; but it is not the end for which to live. Men and women, whose path is solitary, may so consecrate themselves to ends beyond themselves, that their natures shall grow in all fair and Christlike attributes. Thus the Apostle Paul felt himself constrained to remain unmarried, and for those situated as he was he advised this course (1 Cor. vii. 8). To married and unmarried alike, who live not unto themselves, the same guidance is extended, and the same crown of moral excellence is promised.

Among the conditions which must be present in order to constitute a perfect marriage we note the following. *Mutual love and trust:* There must be such honest affection based on sufficient knowledge as shall enable two persons to commit themselves unreservedly to one another. How it may have arisen, what may be the history of its growth, and how it may at first express itself, are points immensely interesting to the lovers. They are the proper theme of poet and novelist, and must ever remain a source of pure delight; but they are in themselves of secondary importance, and do not form the value and strength of love. Love passes beyond the accidents of face or outward charm, and fixes upon the Soul, the Self, the sacred centre of Personality. To that it yields; for that it will live and die. Hence love is independent of outward change; and, when all the charms of youth are gone, it

grows to a warmer devotion, and a true insight into the loveliness of its object. *Harmony of taste, intellectual interest, and moral principle:* Harmony is not identity. There may be wide differences; but these must be included in a fundamental unity of tone and aim. Different elements contributed by two persons of independent judgment and vigorous faculty will make the share of each in the heritage of marriage more profitable and delightful. Fundamental discord, incapacity of reciprocal interest, will impair the union, and mar its happiness. *Sympathy in the Christian faith:* This is of supreme importance. No marriage ought to be contracted by a Christian where there is not good ground for believing that the other person entering into this covenant is a sharer of the Christian faith and hope. To be unequally yoked in this respect is to live under an intolerable burden (2 Cor. vi. 14). The test must be—Is God the strength of this bond? Does mutual love find its consecration in the love of each to Him? Are both alike prepared to make the Word of God supreme in the ordering of the new home? If marriage be thus entered upon, no code is needed, even supposing it were possible to frame one, to regulate the relations of husband and wife. God Himself by His Word and Spirit will give guidance and inspiration. Duties will unfold themselves in the circumstances of life.

The following heads of duty comprehend wide departments of Christian conduct in the married state; and are presented as illustrations of the self-legislative nature of Christian love. *Mutual surrender:* In marriage, husband and wife must make to each other a surrender, surpassing any similar act in any other relationship. Yet this does not imply the loss of personality. Rather is it the means towards recovery and enrichment of the personal life. The natural headship of the husband is transfigured, and becomes not a tyranny, but a ministry; and the natural subjection of the wife is relieved from all trace of servility or abjectness. *Mutual loyalty:* Surrender, accordingly, does not provoke disrespect; it rather supplies the motive for tenderest esteem, and careful maintenance of each other's honour. This includes, not only absolute fidelity to the marriage tie in deed and thought, but such manner of speech and behaviour as shall maintain the personal honour both of husband and of wife. Disrespect, discourtesy, rudeness, failure of gentle and chivalrous behaviour, are offences against the ideal of marriage, and will bring their penalty in loss of mutual esteem and affection. *Mutual confidence:* The ideal of marriage is companionship, intimate, unreserved, open-hearted, truthful and transparent. Secrecy and reserve will soon breed jealousy and mistrust.

Husbands and wives ought to share one another's interests, and to live in the light of each other's knowledge and sympathy. To be after years of married life still strangers to one another's hearts would be the tragedy of two souls. *Mutual service:* In marriage there can be no strict division of labour, no absolute separateness of life. Even in procuring the maintenance of the family, there must be coöperation in labour and in thrift. In the nurture and training of the children, there must also be complete mutual sympathy and active help. The husband is to be blamed who casts this task on his wife. Above all in pursuit of the divine life, each is to help the other. There is no greater sin that wife or husband can commit, than to lower the tone of the other's spiritual life. *Mutual forbearance:* Many things arise from day to day which put a strain on married love. In the circumstances of daily life, there will occur accidents, misfortunes, or disasters, which will form a temptation to irritability or anger. Differences of opinion provoke flashes of temper. Errors, faults, trespasses, may be committed, which give gravest annoyance or displeasure. All these things are the discipline of character, and present the opportunity of love's triumph. The cross word, the bitter sentence, the sullen look, the grudging forgiveness, the petty revenge, are love's defeat, and prepare for its

ultimate decay (Col. iii. 19). Conquer here by patience, gentleness, kindness; and the marriage tie shall have been made thereby more tender and enduring.

In general, the law of the married life may thus be stated—so live that when the beloved of your soul is taken from you there may be no bitterness of regret, and no cloud upon the prospect of a union beyond the grave, more perfect and more beautiful than that which time and sense make possible.

2. **Parents and Children.**—The Christian home is constituted by the presence in it of God, acknowledged, worshipped, and served as its Head. The home is, accordingly, no mere aggregate of individuals thrown together by chance; nor is it a unity owning no stronger bond than blood. It is a spiritual organism, of which God by His Spirit is the animating principle, a spiritual kingdom over which God presides as Lord and law-giver. All the members of a Christian home are thus in covenant with God. He is supreme over them, and is pledged to the fulfilment of His gracious purpose toward them. They are subject to Him, entirely dependent on Him, and are pledged to love and serve Him. Into this position of privilege and obligation, the children of the home are born, and are, therefore from birth in covenant relationship to God, and

are designated in His Word "holy" (1 Cor. vii. 14).

It follows from this view of the constitution of the home, that it cannot be an end in itself. The maintenance of the home, its enrichment, and the worldly advancement of its members, do not by themselves form the design of a Christian household, and ought not to be the dominant aim of any member of it. Domestic affection or family loyalty, which does not rise beyond this point of view, has missed its aim, and will do harm to those whose interests are its avowed object. Family selfishness is as ugly and disastrous as any other form of selfishness. The family exists for the sake of ends beyond itself, for the production of human character that shall be after the type of Christ, and for the preparation and equipment of human personality for the service of God and man. Out of this, the divine function of the family, arise the duties of parents and children respectively.

The duty of Christian parents is first of all to present their children to God in Baptism (Acts ii. 39; 1 Cor. vii. 14). Baptism is the seal of the Covenant, of which the children born to Christian parents are already members. In Baptism, God declares His design of mercy toward the new-born soul. Baptism is, therefore, a continual reminder to the parent of his child's great destiny; and to

the child himself, in after days, is a solemn witness to the law of spiritual life under which he lives. In Baptism, God at the same time promises the gift of His Spirit to make this great design effective in the experience of the child. The parent is thus encouraged to believe that in all his labours for the spiritual welfare of the child, he is acting in coöperation with the Spirit of God. The child, also, when definitely and consciously summoned to the act of faith and obedience is stimulated by the assurance conveyed in his baptism that the Spirit of God will not be wanting to "persuade and enable" him to accept Christ, and thus to be the almighty agent in his regeneration. The unbaptised child of Christian parents is in the position of an unacknowledged heir to a crown and kingdom, growing up ignorant of his great future, and deprived of the quickening influence so great a hope is fitted to exert.

The further duty of Christian parents is to train their children, to bring them up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The aim of training is surrender of will to the will of God, and complete harmony with it. To see their children thus yielded to God and in fellowship with God is the consummation, toward which parents, who realise their duty, labour with many prayers. It is to be observed, however, that the will does not operate, as it were, nakedly, but through and upon the material of temperament and disposition. To influence the

will, accordingly, there must be careful study of the special elements in the child's constitution. Some children are bold and confident; others timid and diffident. Some are keen and quick, eager to enquire and ask; others are more sluggish, less intelligent, too indolent to seek for reasons. Some are sensitive, inclined to be morbid; others are of coarser fibre. All these require treatment peculiar to their special disposition. Mistakes are fatal here. Parents must know their children with an intimate acquaintance, based on sympathetic study and observation. The work of training, accordingly, requires closest and most unremitting attention. It is to be pursued from morning to night, and will assume a countless variety of forms. There is no incident so trifling that it does not afford opportunity for further discharge of this duty. There is no action so slight that it does not enter into the making of character, and need not therefore obtain the parent's watchful control.

The process of training, however, while thus infinitely varied, moves between two fixed points. The first of these is Authority. No progress can be made unless the authority of the parent be permanent. It need not be said that this throws an immense responsibility on the parent in the exercise of authority (1 Tim. iii. 4; Ephes. vi. 4; Col. iii. 21). Tragic mistakes may be made through softness and negligence on the one side, harshness

and unreasonableness on the other. The command, however, being conceived according to the parent's highest conception of reason and right in the particular circumstances, must be obeyed. The will of the child must be brought to surrender, and this surrender to authority must become a habit. The child who has never learnt to obey is unfit for the struggle of life. The second is Liberty. Obedience that is never more or higher than compulsory yielding to authority leaves the character still unstable. The parent's work is not complete, till the child, now passing out of childhood, freely and intelligently chooses the good which he has hitherto known as the bare will of the parent, and finds his joy in doing of his own proper motion what once he did by constraint of bare command. Thus through his relations to an earthly parent does the child learn his relation to the heavenly Father, and is prepared to appreciate and exercise "the liberty of the children to God."

The duty of children to their parents is summed up in obedience (Ephes. vi. 1-3; Col. iii. 20). During the period of pupilage, while the sense of independence has not awakened, and the powers of body and mind are undeveloped, this obedience must be absolute and unquestioned. Naturally the children will render it under constraint of love. Those parents must be criminally weak or unwise who fail to secure it. The situation changes, how-

ever, with the advance of the child into the period of transition between childhood and full maturity. This period is marked by peculiar difficulties and dangers. Manhood has come upon the young nature, and has filled it with the intoxication of independence. The youth, who is scarcely yet a man, is absurdly conscious of himself as a personality, and fiercely resents the restraints of authority. Many circumstances in this age of intense subjectivity and individualism tend to make the relations between parents and their elder children who still reside in the home peculiarly delicate and difficult. The children are sometimes better educated than their parents, and do not yet understand that life brings wisdom which the most modern school cannot convey. They frequently earn wages enough to gratify their taste for pleasure, and they forget the acknowledgment due to their parents for the labour bestowed upon them in the years of their helpless dependence. It is to be admitted also that parents are often unwise, and do not understand that methods applicable to the child will be harmful when applied to the young man or maiden. None of these difficulties, however, touch the moral situation. The children of the home are, in respect of duty to their parents, children still, whatever their age. If the child is bound to render obedience absolute and unquestioning, the young man is bound to render

the higher service of loyalty. He is bound to support his parents' authority in his own individual example, and by his influence upon the younger members of the family. The surrender of will, which is lovely when made in the unconsciousness of childhood, is fairer still, when made freely under constraint of well understood sense of duty. The young man, who thus intelligently and by deliberate act of will accepts an authority superior to himself, is learning invaluable lessons in self-discipline, and is preparing himself for the possession and exercise of powers of government. Thus through generations of family life wise and noble traditions will be maintained. Individual lives will be honourable and dignified; and Church and State will be enriched by generous and patriotic service.

The loyalty of son or daughter will show itself also in the contributions they make out of their earnings to the family support. These have a value altogether out of proportion to the mere amount in money. To the parent they are the dear and welcome token of the child's willingness to make sacrifices for love's sake. To the young man or maiden the surrender of some pleasure or vanity is altogether gain, giving strenuousness to self-denial, nobility to the ideal of life. No young man will suffer in body or mind, because he denies himself expensive amuse-

ments, in order to lighten his parents' burden. No girl will lose one atom of beauty or attractiveness, because she denies herself some costly article of adornment. Self-indulgence alone can injure the character, or mar its beauty.

The duties of children to their parents continue, while the parents remain within reach of love's manifestation. Even though the sons and daughters of the home have to seek their livelihood in other cities or distant lands, the family bond remains unaffected by time or space. It is their bounden duty, and it will be their delight and exceeding great reward, to maintain by all means open to them the link that binds them to the home where their life was cradled and their souls were nurtured. Frequent visits, where these are possible, regular correspondence, and continual intercession before the throne of infinite love, keep the spiritual unity of the home intact. Death will thus be robbed of its terror, for it will cast no doubt upon the certainty of reunion.

One sad question cannot be passed over, though it admits only of briefest treatment—what if the parents have failed in their duty, have been wickedly neglectful of their children's true interests, have been, perhaps, openly profane or vicious, dishonest, drunken or unclean? Have the children in this tragic situation no duty to

their parents? If the children of such a home come to know God, they will find that they have a duty laid on them, the saddest and holiest ever given to a human soul. All their duty as children remains, but in the strangest way transfigured. Love has lost the element of respect, and is condensed into divinest compassion. Obedience is transformed into witness, rendered even with the pains of martyrdom, on behalf of God and His Holy Law. Loyalty finds its task in hiding a parent's shame, guiding a parent's erring step, and winning a parent's soul. If to a child's humble testimony, and a child's secret prayer, the soul of father or mother be given as a prize, there shall be, on earth, no deeper happiness, and in the presence of the angels, no greater joy.

3. **Brothers and Sisters.** — The home is a realm, whose bond is love, whose law is the will of God. Brothers and sisters, under the presidency of father and mother, are citizens of the kingdom of the home. Their relationship is, therefore, not accidental nor limited to mere physical proximity. It is essentially moral, and binds those who stand in it in a close and lovely fellowship. Their mutual indifference or estrangement is treason to the home of which they are members, and to which they are pledged to be loyal. If brothers and sisters find beyond the circle of the family, more

attractive and enduring friendships, or higher and closer spiritual affinity, than they do within it, there must have been some blemish in the domestic life, some failure in parents, or children, or both alike, to realise the ideal of the home. Brothers and sisters should pass out of the home into the wider world true and lasting friends. If this is to be the case, however, their relations within the home must be kept at the highest point of spiritual efficiency. During the period of childhood, the influence of brothers and sisters is necessarily unconscious, and is highest when most unconscious. It is not only, or chiefly, when one member of a family is made consciously the guardian of another, that the highest results are attained. It is rather in the republic of the home, amid the ordinary intercourse of daily life, and the frank equality of work and play, that the highest educative influence is exerted. Children educate one another, without their being aware of it.

As the mind develops, however, and the character matures, the ends thus served instinctively must be intelligently grasped by the members of the family, and made the conscious aim of action. Brothers and sisters ought, in the first place, to aim at one another's happiness. The home ought to be the brightest spot on earth to those who belong to it, so that they shall turn to it for their purest delight. The daughters of

the house find here large scope for the exercise of all that is brightest and most winning in their nature. By womanly wit and gaiety, by the charm of manner, and the strength of affection, and by the indefinable power of personal attraction, they make the home which their brothers inhabit. The young men of the family have also their work to do, and are by no means to come home with no other idea than that of being amused and entertained. They can bring from the sphere of their activities the vivid interests, the larger concerns, and the weightier questions of the great world which lies beyond the narrow precincts of the home. They can thus redeem family intercourse from the deadly dulness of gossip, the degrading influence of ceaseless acrid discussion of the characters and actions of neighbours and acquaintances, and the soul destroying tendency of frivolous and unprofitable jesting. To belong to a Christian home, warm with human kindness, and bright with intellectual vitality, is to enjoy the privilege of a liberal education.

Brothers and sisters ought, in the second place, to show to one another genuine courtesy. The closeness and familiarity of the relationship is too often made the excuse for indifference, neglect, or positive rudeness, which would receive speedy punishment in any other social sphere. The home ought to be the training school in manners,

inasmuch as manners form part of morality. The young man, who fails in the respect due to his sisters, has lost the sense of the dignity and honour of womanhood. His polite manners in society veil his inward lack of true chivalry. The neglect or rudeness, with which he treats his sister, will be the lot of his wife, not many days after the attentions of courtship have been concluded in marriage. The young woman, who does not care to win and keep the affections of her brother, is not worthy the love and homage of any true man. Her winning ways in society disguise the deep-rooted vanity and selfishness, which forebode heart estrangement and unhappiness in the married life. Courtesy, kindness, and respect, expressed in speech, manner, and behaviour, form the bulwark and support of love. Left defenceless in these respects, love will scarce withstand the imperious assault of selfishness. The history of many a disintegrated family may be traced to causes so seeming slight as rudeness of speech and boorishness of demeanour. The humblest home may be the abode of courtesy and kindness, as genuine as ever were found in a palace. Artisans and farm-labourers, shop-girls, and factory hands, may be as true gentlemen, and gentlewomen, as any who adorn the highest ranks of society.

Brothers and sisters owe to one another, finally, duties of mutual service. Brothers owe to sisters

the fundamental duty of protection. Their manly strength is to be dedicated to the preservation of their sisters' safety, dignity, and honour. There are in all ranks of society selfish unprincipled men, who are ready to take advantage of a young girl's ignorance and innocence, and seek her company simply for amusement, reckless of any injury he may do her affections or her character. A brother's guardianship must secure the sister's immunity from all such insolent attack. Beyond this, brothers owe to sisters frank and loving comradeship. The Turk's contempt for woman's intellectual or spiritual capacity is to find no place in a Christian family. It may well be that, even in questions of general interest and in matters of intellectual debate, the brother may have as much to receive from his sister, as ever, in the pride of youthful superiority, he imagined he could impart to her. Sex reigns even in intellect and character. The brother's mental and moral development craves the supplement of woman's wit and insight; while sisters require the breadth and steadfastness which man's wider outlook, and more intense and varied life, are fitted to supply. Brothers, too, can render to sisters a service of a high and delicate nature. By themselves living nobly and unselfishly they can present to their sister's view an ideal of true manliness, and show them what is to be loved and honoured in manhood, while, at the same time, they

can guide their sisters to a perception of what a high-minded Christian man needs, admires, and looks for in womanhood.

All the delicate questions which emerge in the relationship of the sexes may best be solved in the pure and bright atmosphere of the home. Fewer women would throw themselves away upon worthless men, if in fellowship with their brothers they had acquired the instinct to discern what is the true worth of manhood. Sisters on their part have a great ministry of love toward their brothers. Sometimes it may be asked in scorn, or a woman might ask in a moment of weariness and despondency—what can one, who is so limited in range of exercise, so fixed in routine of action, do for the wider world of humanity? The answer is —something infinitely valuable, without which the world would be waste, and human life intolerable, which only a true woman can do. The elevation of taste, the refining of manners, the purifying of moral sentiment, the presentation of the ideal of womanhood, gracious, benignant, tender, wise, and holy, so that in the sight of it vileness may be rebuked, and all chaste and reverent emotions be awakened, and the vow of chivalry be taken, in the young man's secret heart,—this is the service sisters may render to brothers in all Christian homes, whether lowly or exalted.

Above all, the sense of the unseen is woman's

peculiar gift. To be witness for the unseen is woman's peculiar mission. The peculiarity of man's constitution, coarser in fibre, more blunt in spiritual capacity than a woman's, the conditions of the life he commonly lives, harder and more exposed to gross temptations, make faith difficult to him, and betray him into sensuality and materialism. The women of the home, therefore are its missionaries. All that the cloud-borne Madonna was to the mediæval worshipper, the sister may be to the brother, calling him to a higher life, guiding him to purity and godliness. It was a woman who first saw the Risen Christ, and bore to the Church the message of the Resurrection. Even so from a sister's lips and a sister's character may a brother know of the possibility of a new life in Christ, and come himself to make the great discovery. Thus shall the family ranks be closed under the supremacy of the King.

4. **Master and Servant.**—Hired service in a family is an expedient to extend the usefulness of sons and daughters. Domestic service in a Christian home is to take as its type the relation of children to parents, and not at all that of slave to master. The New Testament references (Ephes. vi. 5-9; Col. iii. 22; iv. 1; Tit. ii. 9-10; Philem. ver. 16) necessarily imply the institution of slavery. In Christian homes, however, the servant is a member of the family, with claims

upon the affectionate interest of all the other members. The payment of wages by no means alters this moral aspect of the relationship. It may be that, in modern times, through faults on both sides, the relations between servants and their employers have become cold and estranged. Enough homes, however, still remain, in which servants are treated as friends, to show what this relationship may be made, how profitable, delightful, and honourable to both parties in it. The heads of the household must be at least as reasonable and considerate, while requiring all due submission, in their dealing with their servants, as with their children. Servants must be as prompt, as cheerful, and as exact in their obedience as well-trained children, and must seek as older sons or daughters the highest welfare of the household to which they belong. The office of the nurse is peculiarly honourable, and has special opportunities of sacred ministry. The classic instance here is that of Maria Mills, nurse of Lord Shaftesbury in his neglected childhood. It is well known how she loved him with the tenderness and wisdom of a mother, when his own mother so strangely misunderstood her duty, so that, though she died before he was eight years old, she had implanted in him that seed of devotion to God, which bore, in his after career, so great a harvest.

In families, which include in their circle domestic

servants, the children of the rich may learn the true spiritual equality of men, may be cured of pride, before it has had time to develop as a disease, and may be sent into the world, destitute of that sense of class which is the anti-Christ of modern society. From well-governed homes, servants may pass to homes of their own with a high conception of family life, and with practical skill in domestic management. Thus both sides in the relationship may be permanently benefited; and the money payment be transcended in a higher exchange.

CHAPTER II.

THE WORK OF LIFE.

FROM the shelter of the home, men and women pass out into the world to do the work of life. In the vast majority of families, the younger members must find work to do in order to support themselves in independence. Even when this motive to work is not present, there is a moral constraint binding men and women to enter upon some definite calling in life. It is true that the woman's calling may lie within the home. If it does, let it be well understood that it is a calling wherein work is to be done, and not a position of elegant idleness. There is no room in a healthy community for the "idle rich"; and there is no room in any sound Christian society for the idle young woman, supported by the fruits of the labour of others, serving in earlier life a merely decorative function, and in later life not even that. The special occupations and professions are now, in increasing numbers, open to women; and there is the immense field of specifically philanthropic and Christian enterprise at home and abroad, where the services

of women are peculiarly valuable. No young woman, therefore, need be idle. Within the home or beyond it, there is definite work waiting for the heart, brain, and hands of the daughters of every Christian family. Parents ought to train their daughters to the consciousness of a vocation in life, and should develop their daughter's gifts towards some definite line of work. The desultoriness, emptiness, and *ennui*, by which the lives of the daughters of middle class homes are apt to be blighted, will thus be replaced by the brightness and joy, and the physical and moral health, which are the sure reward of concentrated and regulated energy.

Whatever view may be taken of the position of young women, there can be no question of the necessity laid upon every young man to find and follow a special calling in life. The New Testament speaks out clearly upon the shame of idleness, and the moral obligation of work (2 Thess. iii. 10-12; 1 Cor. vii. 20; Matt. xxv. 15). The compilers of the First Book of Discipline, in their desire to reproduce the essential elements of primitive Christianity, have dwelt on this necessity of work, and have conferred upon the Christian State the authority to enforce it. "This must be carefully provided, that no father of what estate or condition that ever he be, use his children at his own fantasie, especially in their youth-head; but

all must be compelled to bring up their children in learning and vertue. The rich and potent may not be permitted to suffer their children to spend their youth in vain idlenesse, as heretofore they have done. But they must be exhorted, and by the censure of the Kirk compelled to dedicate their sonnes, by training them up in good exercises, to the profite of the Kirk and Commonwealth."

After appointing the time for every course of study, they conclude: "and the rest till the age of twenty-four years, to be spent in the study, wherein the learner would profit the church or commonwealth be it in the lawes, physick, or divinitie, which time of twenty-four years being spent in the Schools, the learner must be removed to serve the church, or commonwealth, unlesse he be found a necessary reader in this same colledge or university."

It is strange to find John Knox so much in sympathy with modern Socialism; and it is questionable whether the authority of the State ought to be invoked. There can be no question, however, of the authority of God, binding upon every man, who will live nobly, the duty of serving his generation, to the utmost of the opportunities and talents God has given him. In the work of life, accordingly, we fulfil the intention of the divine dealing with our souls. God placed us in Christian homes, not that we might remain in them enjoying

their ease and comfort, not even that we might devote ourselves to their aggrandisement, but that in due time we might leave them, and carry into the world the moral results of our training while we belonged to them. It is not inappropriate or irreverent to refer to our Lord's example, who, though He was loyal as a son to a mother, yet clearly indicated the consciousness of a mission, to which He must devote Himself, and in which He must follow an independent career (*cf.* Luke ii. 49 with John ii. 4).

God called us into His Kingdom, not that we might remain safe as in a paddock, but that we might glorify Him, and extend the bounds of that realm of righteousness, peace, and joy, which came with Christ, and which depends for its progressive victory on the service of the redeemed who are its citizens. God calls us to some definite work, not that we may thereby win our livelihood, or amass a fortune, but that we may render to Him a service, which, in the condescension of His grace He commits to our hands, and which, in His sovereign disposal of the lives of His children, He will receive from no one else.

1. **Survey of the Field.**—The Christian view of the world is that it is God's, and, therefore, very good. All that He made has a divine use and function: the material universe with its immense resources upon whose incalculable fulness men are

only now entering, and the body and soul and mind of man, more marvellous still in constitution and in power. These He has, further, fitted to one another, so that in the world man finds the sphere of his action, and the instruments of his design, the controlling principle of all his activities being the will of God.

The Christian view, however, recognises the presence of evil in the world, and in man. All that is in the world is, therefore, not fit for human use or enjoyment; and all activities possible to man are not morally permissible. For a being thus placed, accordingly, the work of life must lie within the limits determined by these two ends; it must carry out such designs as are clearly God's intention in the creation of the world and man; and it must repel the assault of evil upon the sphere within which God's will is being done, and extend that sphere over the domain where evil is dominant. Any work which cannot be brought within these limits is not work for a Christian man to do. Within these limits, all work gains the character of a divine service. The mischievous distinction of Sacred and Secular has no place in the Kingdom of God. The work of a man's daily calling must never be allowed to fall out of the sphere of moral interest, or moral judgment. The man is in it the servant of God; his work is sacred as done for God and under the great Taskmaster's eye. It is

misleading to limit the honourable distinction of "work of the Lord," to work which is specifically spiritual in its aim.

The lines of George Herbert are often quoted in this connection:

> "All may of Thee partake:
> Nothing can be so mean,
> Which with this tincture (for Thy sake)
> Will not grow bright and clean.
>
> "A servant with this clause
> Makes drudgery divine,
> Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
> Makes that and the action fine."

Dean Goulbourn, commenting on these verses, adds: "If both a child's education, and a slave's drudgery find their place in the vast system of God's service, what lawful calling can we suppose to be excluded from a place in that system?"[1]

So the little silk-winder of Browning's poem sings, finding in lowliest lot a divine appointment, a divine guardianship, and a divine reward:

> "All service ranks the same with God:
> If now, as formerly He trod
> Paradise, His presence fills
> Our earth, each only as God wills
> Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,
> Are we; there is no last or first."

Taking a bird's eye view of the field of divine service thus open to us, we note the following

[1] See "Thoughts on Personal Religion," Part I., ch. iv., and Part III., ch. iii.

classes of labour. Of fundamental importance, as that upon which the whole superstructure of Society rests, we have Agriculture. Here man stands next to Nature to receive the manifold gifts, which God has ordained for his varied requirements. Those, accordingly, whose work leads them to the cultivation of the land have a calling, ancient as the life of man on the earth, and peculiarly fitted to lead men to a sense of their dependence upon the power and faithfulness of God, and to develop in them such virtues as patience and hope, moderation in living, and perseverance in toil (Gen. viii. 22; Is. liv. 9, 10; Jas. v. 7). The depopulation of country districts, the destruction of peasant homes, and the drafting of the flower of the rural population into cities is an unmixed evil. The work of the husbandman is honourable in itself, and most beneficial to the commonwealth, not merely as providing the necessaries of life, but as contributing to the body politic a class from which have arisen many most eminent for their abilities, their moral qualities, and their usefulness. Scotland, of all countries, has reason to be proud of its peasantry, and to mourn its threatened extinction. The temptations of the worker upon the land lie in the direction of aversion to intellectual pursuits, and a tendency to grossness of pleasure. The shadow of impurity hangs dark over many of the fairest territories in our land.

Touching hands with Agriculture come the Handicrafts, by which the products of Nature are wrought into shape for the uses of civilised life. Society cannot remain in the pastoral or agricultural stage. The progress of mind and character leads to a new relation to Nature, in which men do not simply follow her lead, but take the initiative, and so act upon the resources they discover within her as to build up for themselves a more highly organised and more elaborately equipped social life. The artisan and the manufacturer, accordingly, are direct agents in the advance of the race, and aid in increasing, not merely its material wealth, but its store of mental and moral faculty. The humblest artisan has, therefore, a share in the highest intellectual and spiritual gains of society at large, and deserves the respect of those whom his labour enables to live a larger and nobler life than would otherwise be open to them. It is the duty of society to preserve its hand-workers from the dangers which may be incident to their occupation, and to secure that they shall never be regarded as a mere part of the machinery amid which their labour lies. The hand-worker, living as he necessarily does in centres of population, has opportunity of mental development, and of acquaintance with the wide and vivid interests of society, which it will be at his peril if he neglect. His temptation will be to

take a low view of the work he does, to look upon his relation to it as temporary and accidental, and to throw himself, when it is over, into the stream of mere self-indulgence. The modern division of labour, confining a man to some narrow round of mechanical actions, and the modern shortening of hours of labour, right and proper though they be, have accentuated the dangers to which hand-workers in our cities are exposed, and make necessary special watchfulness and self-control.

The predominant business of modern Society is Commerce, by which the results of agriculture and the handicrafts are distributed through the world as necessity arises. The task of Commerce, therefore, is essentially humane and even benevolent; and in the history of the race Commerce has been a leading factor in subduing savagery, restraining the hostilities of nations, encouraging peaceful arts, raising degraded peoples, and giving them a place in the organism of humanity, and, in general, ameliorating the lot of millions of mankind. Let the merchant magnify his office. It is useful and honourable. The moral qualities, which accompany those aptitudes and faculties which secure success in a commercial career, are intentness and earnestness of mind, breadth of interest in all matters affecting the welfare of society, fixedness of purpose which does not relax till it have gained its end. The merchantman stands in our Lord's teaching

as the type of the Kingdom of Heaven; and the good business man has undergone a mental and moral discipline which ought to make him a noble servant of God. No doubt, Commerce may be degraded, till it become a mere scramble for wealth, in which all remembrance of its higher ends is lost and swallowed up in the fierce selfishness of rivals and enemies. Those engaged in it will then deteriorate in character, as love of gain subdues all the finer impulses of their natures, deadens their consciences, and even narrows and stupefies the higher intellectual faculties. The trader has to struggle against the strong tide of selfishness, and has to lift himself above the delusion which estimates all things in terms of money. He must set the Cross above the Counter, and consider that, even in buying and selling, he that saveth his life shall lose it.

The learned Professions presuppose the work of the special trades and pursuits, which minister to the material wants of man, and build the fabric of material civilisation. They take man in his higher mental and moral constitution, and recognise in him an inherent nobleness, which is worthy of preservation and development. Their interests are thus universal, and are unaffected by local or national distinctions. The results they gain are the direct heritage of mankind. They demand for their due discharge the very highest qualities of

mind and heart; and afford a vocation which the brightest and the worthiest may be proud to follow. It is a pity if the modern rush for wealth should divert from pure learning the honourable ambition of the youth of our land. It is a greater pity if it should infect the Professions themselves, and degrade them into mere speculative concerns, where the prize is not discovery of truth, but increase of financial gain.

In entering on one of them, a young man or woman is drawing very close to the God of truth, and is becoming in a distinctive sense His servant in the cause of humanity. The Healing Art is devoted to the service of the sick and suffering, and is the most Christ-like calling, save one, which man or woman can follow, constituting, indeed, the point where redemption touches the physical side of man's complex nature. Law is directed to the maintenance of the organic unity of the body politic, welding individual right into the harmony of social well-being, guarding the sanctity of personal life against all assault of selfishness whether individual or public. The legal calling thus belongs to the mighty working whereby God orders the affairs of His universal Kingdom; for "of Law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage; the very least as feeling

her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power; both Angels and men and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy."[1]

Other professions deal more exclusively with the intellectual nature of man; and in these the finest and most acute minds of either sex may find congenial exercise. Education lays its hand on the mental faculties in the process of their growth, and fits them for service. Literature gives form to the experiences of individuals and of the race, adds to the increment of wisdom, and hands it on to generations yet unborn. Journalism serves a more temporary function, and embodies thoughts which may perish in the moment of utterance; none the less it is indispensable and honourable, as quickening and elevating the daily life of man, and forming the medium through which nations may find their brotherhood. The Pastoral Office connects itself with that aspect of man's constitution in which the image of God is more perfectly to be discerned. It addresses man as free, responsible, immortal. It deals with thoughts, impulses, purposes, which are the springs of action. It follows the subtle lines of affection and spiritual affinity by which men are bound to their fellows and to God. It rises beyond the fluctuation of feeling, the oppor-

[1] Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity," Book I., xvi. 8.

tunism of selfish desire, and witnesses to the claim of eternal right. It descends beneath the depths of failure and sin, and speaks the divine accents of eternal mercy. It is at home with the young and prosperous, encouraging them to behold and follow ends not confined to time or things material. It is more at home with the struggling, the defeated, the weary and the dying, cheering them with promises of a life higher than temporal, a strength more than human, and quickening within them a hope that enters within the veil.

There is no rank which does not need this priestly ministry, no race which does not cry aloud for such benignant remedy. Here is a calling which may well attract to its pursuit the flower of any nation. Alone of all the professions, it invites to its membership men of lowly birth, in the persuasion that community of origin and experience with the common people can be no hindrance, but rather a help, to the right apprehension of their spiritual necessities. At the same time, it welcomes to its work the best intellectual and moral force any social grade can provide. Time was in Scotland, when the son of the peasant met in the ranks of this profession the son of the merchant prince, or even of the noble. It will be an evil day when this wholly ceases; for thus we have a witness to the primitive democracy of the Christian Church, and a standing

protest against the mischievous stiffening of class demarcations. No doubt there are many temptations besetting the professional callings. In the blunt criticism of public opinion, medicine tends to atheism, law to dishonesty, divinity to falsehood and unreality. These vices are, however, themselves witness to the ideal of excellence set before those who follow these professions. The good we see it is possible to reach; and failure becomes our condemnation. The professional career has the divine sanction; and in it divine service may be done, and the highest type of character be achieved.

Two callings which lie somewhat apart from the ordinary life of society may be more briefly noticed. The work of the soldier is necessary to society constituted as it now is, and may be done by a Christian man. We admit and assert with deepening horror that war is an unspeakable evil, that any Prince or Statesman who hurried his country into war would be a gigantic criminal, and that any nation which, for selfish reasons, declared war against a neighbour, would deserve the heaviest penalty of providence. We assert too that war is always caused by sin or folly. At the same time, there are evils worse than war. The ignoble servitude of a people, the degrading tyranny of a conquering race or dynasty, civil anarchy, or savage turbulence,

are evils which in the nature of the case can only be referred for redress to the dread arbitrament of the sword. Any nation which selfishly declined to draw the sword on behalf of right or mercy, in order to purchase its own security, would betray a decadence of moral vigour which would surely end in evils worse than bloodshed. The calling of the soldier is, therefore, an exigency of a world where sin abounds. It has the divine approval. Its duties may be discharged for God. It affords to the individual a splendid discipline in many of the qualities which enter into the noblest manhood. It provides for the nation an object lesson in the highest virtues, and a store of heroic memories, which are the food of valour and virtue for succeeding generations of citizens. In point of fact, a generation which has seen Charles Gordon die at his post in Khartoum, has already an answer to the question, "may a Christian be a soldier?"

The work of the artist bears a yet clearer impress of the divine sanction. In the constitution of man as it has come from the hand of God, there is the faculty of imagination, the sense of the beautiful. To neglect this side of our nature would be sin. Its culture and development require, therefore, a special calling, which may be followed for the welfare of man and the glory of God. The poet, the painter,

the sculptor, are all engaged in holding before the eyes of men forms of ideal loveliness, in order that the reality of things lovely may become a conviction and a passion in the heart. It is true that the artist, like the doctor, the lawyer, or the man of letters, may do his work well, without being consciously a servant of God. It may even be true that the artist need not select, as the subject of his idealisation, themes explicitly religious in their immediate reference. None the less is it true, that, in presenting the ideal to man, he is doing the work of God, and will do it the better for being consciously and avowedly the servant of God. The theatre and the profession of the actor present a different problem. It may be discussed in the interests of art, whether the theatre, with its enormous number of performances and its constant purveying to the instinct of pleasure, is not false to its artistic function. It may even be asked whether the art of dramatic representation is not injured and almost lost through the existence of a class, withdrawn from the ordinary activities of life, and devoted to its pursuit. It might be maintained as a matter of theory that the theatre, properly administered, might serve a great educative function in the community, and that enacting dramas on the stage might be a task capable of being done for Christ. All such questions, how-

ever, fall aside, in face of the enormous evils, which attend the administration of theatres in the present day. It may be that we personally enjoy dramatic representations, and even benefit by those which are occasionally rendered; but, when we consider the harm which the theatre undoubtedly works among those who frequent it, and those who act upon the stage, the principles of Christian expediency (1 Cor. x. 23), and of Christian charity (Rom. xiv. 15), forbid our participating in it as a permanent institution, whether as spectators or as actors.

2. **The Choice of a Calling.**—In the work of life we are not mere adventurers, striking out a path for ourselves. By redemption we have been made instruments of the divine purpose, which includes our whole career. The term "calling" is thus to be pressed to its full application. It is proper to speak of ministers getting a call, their "call" coming from God through the mouth of the Christian congregation. With the same propriety may any worker in the world be said to receive a call from God to his particular task.

Ministers are ordained to their work by the direct gift of the Holy Spirit, the outward sign commonly used being the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery.[1] In quite analogous sense, any

[1] The sign, however, is not essential to true ordination, and was not employed by the early Scottish Reformers.

worker in the broad field of divine service receives ordination at God's hands, and is endowed, as Bezaleel and Aholiab were, for the special task committed to him. The Call, therefore, comes from God. We dare not go where we are not called. It behoves us, therefore, to be very attentive to the voice of God. It cannot be missed of any who will preserve a loyal heart and an open mind.

God speaks to us *in the circumstances of life.* There is a divinity in common providences, which determines the ends, and shapes the courses of our lives. In choosing a calling, therefore, every element of the situation must be taken into consideration. Especially the aspect of filial and fraternal duty must be regarded. A young man may find it right to turn aside from a path, which he might otherwise have pursued, if it be barred by a parent's or a sister's need. No blessing can attend selfishness, however successful its career. By watching the incidents of our life, and by setting them in the light of God's word, we shall scarcely fail of hearing the Voice which says "This is the way; walk ye in it." God speaks to us further *in the bent of our individual disposition.* Love of our vocation is essential to its efficient discharge. Parents ought to remember this, and should be on the watch to discern any peculiar taste or capacity

in their children, and should be careful to do it justice, and to give it exercise. Great injury may be done by forcing a young man or woman into uncongenial employment. Such injury reaches the level of crime, when a son is thrust into the sacred office of the ministry, simply because it provides a genteel occupation. The inner call must always be present along with outer circumstances, if they, even when seemingly most favourable, are to be regarded as providential.

Love of our vocation is indeed essential to its proper moral discharge, and to all true ethical gain to be derived from it. Work is well done only when done for its own sake. Work is best done, when it is done in God's sight, and for Christ's sake. To work simply for a livelihood, or with no other thought than to amass wealth, is to be a slave. We have made money our master; and to serve any power, save that of God, is to place our souls in bondage. We are free, only when we stand before our work, and view it as a divine service, and do it for love of God and of the work itself. A movement to give the worker higher wages and shorter hours of labour may be most proper, if its end be to provide opportunity for the social and moral progress of the worker. If, however, the motive of the agitation be distaste of work and love of

money or ease, it stands thereby condemned. Many economic problems run up for their solution into the moral sphere. If throughout the workers of our country there be maintained a genuine love of work, an honourable pride in it, and a perception of all its gains, moral as well as material, the standard of efficiency will be well maintained, and as a nation we shall have nothing to fear from the competition of rival races.

God speaks to us above all *in conscience.* The proposed calling must be subjected to the moral test, carefully and honestly employed. What effect is this occupation likely to have upon me? Can I do this work, and preserve my integrity? Does it present temptations against which it is little likely I shall be able to hold out? By devoting myself to it, is it probable I shall lose my susceptibility to spiritual influences, my love for the concerns of the divine life? Is it in itself an occupation not permissible to a Christian, even though it may be permitted by law? Is it, for instance, so largely speculative that it is only a form of gambling, in which gain does not go by merit, and profit is out of all proportion to use? Is it, possibly, a trade by which society is injured, and the characters of those who employ its products are too often destroyed? In a word, Can I do this thing for the glory of God? If not, it is forbidden.

There is one trade, viz. trade in alcohol, which at once arises to the view, as presenting a difficult question. Theoretically, we may admit that there is a use of alcohol which is not sinful, and that consequently the making and selling of it is permissible and right. It may be pointed out that men engaged in it have been conspicuous as philanthropic and religious men; though it must be remembered that such persons are to be found in the class of brewers and distillers, removed, therefore, from immediate contact with the evils of which the material they make is the agent. Practically, it may be urged that thousands of persons are in the trade, having entered it with no evil motive, and are now living on its proceeds reputable lives. Certainly it would be wrong to pass upon such persons moral condemnation, or to banish them from Christian fellowship and the privileges of the Christian Church. At the same time, the trade is profoundly implicated in the crime and misery of the land. In its present form, and under existing conditions, it cannot be carried on for the glory of God and the good of men. No man who values his peace of conscience, his growth in Christian character, and his advance in the divine life, can enter it, or remain in it. It is not for any man, or any body of men, such as a Temperance Society, or a Church Court, to arrogate the authority of

the divine judgment in the case of individuals; but it is incumbent upon all who love righteousness to bear witness to truth, and bring the searching light of God's word to bear upon the practical and personal question. Thereafter, every soul must bear its own burden.

3. **The Issues of Labour.**—The work of life being thus viewed as a calling of God, we are enabled to see that it must always be, in the truest sense, successful. Work, done from the highest motive and conscientiously carried out, is always its own sure reward.

The moral gains of work as noted above (pp. 62-65), are such as these—humility, perseverance, concentration, sympathy, increased capacity. We add two notes to be found in the character of him who is, in this high sense of the term, a Christian worker, which are not often combined in our conception of moral excellence: diligence in business, an intentness of mind and singleness of purpose, which is bent on producing the best possible kind of workmanship; and unworldliness, a detachment of spirit from the whole earthly sphere which is passing away with the lust thereof. The Christian worker ought to be master of his craft, so that no man of the world, whose equal he is in gifts and capacity, shall be able to excel him; and he ought, at the same time, never to be its slave, tied to the chariot wheel of his business or occupation, and dragged along a course

of mere money-making. He should be the ablest and most competent workman *in* the world; while also he remains not *of* this world, but of that which is to come, which already he inhabits as a citizen (Phil. iii. 20, Revised Version).

The opposite of this lofty Christian type is the worldly man, who makes the world and its enjoyment his chief end, and who lives in it, as though it were the sum of all that is real, and worthy of a practical man's pursuit. Worldliness is a vice of soul more destructive of the divine life in man than many of the special vices, which the worldly man, who is often highly respectable, condemns in unmeasured terms as being wrong, and, still worse, as being indecorous and unprofitable. There is more hope of the drunkard and the harlot, than of the man whose very soul has been corroded by worldliness; "for to be carnally minded is death" (Rom. viii. 6). The combination of these seeming opposites, high efficiency in the world, and noble and unselfish unworldliness is finely expressed in St Paul's favourite vein of paradox (1 Cor. vii. 29-31).

In the highest sense, therefore, success is guaranteed to the man who humbly accepts and loyally follows the calling God has given him; and for his own full satisfaction none other is wanted. At the same time, work has a market value, and its results may be expressed in terms of money. Here,

accordingly, two cases present themselves: that in which there is increase of money, with a marked degree of worldly prosperity, and that in which there is loss of money, with a continuance of straitened means, or even the occurrence of serious adversity. Suppose, then, the result of work be a considerable and increasing share of the good things of the earth, what ought to be the attitude of the Christian toward his possessions? Here the fundamental New Testament doctrine is that there is no absolute proprietorship on man's part as against God. The work man has done is God's work; its fruit is for God's service. If God has placed wealth in smaller or greater amount in any man's hand, it is a stewardship, a trust held on condition of fulfilling the ends specified by Him who has honoured men by making them His trustees. Our right in God's sight to anything we may possess depends on the use we make of it. We forfeit our right by abuse or neglect (1 Thess. iv. 11, 12; 2 Thess. iii. 10, 12; Ephes. iv. 28; 1 Pet. iv. 10; 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5).

If, then, wealth be a stewardship, it is plainly wrong to despise, or refuse it, or condemn those who possess it. To declare that property in any form or degree is incompatible with the Christian life, and that poverty in the outward and material sense of the term is the ideal life of a Christian, is to declare that the world is not God's, and that it

is in itself inconsistent with the divine life, a position which contradicts the truth of Creation, of the Incarnation of the Son of God, and of Redemption. The world is God's; and life in it may be wholly consecrated to His glory, and wholly permeated by His Spirit. The very fact that our Lord assures us that our temporal welfare occupies a place in God's thought for us, condemns as presumptuous the affected spirituality which would neglect it. St Paul roundly condemns the whole system of pretentious asceticism as mere perversity (Col. ii. 20-23). His own example shows how he duly cared, even in prospect of death, for the claims of his body, and the culture of his mind (2 Tim. iv. 13).

The conception of wealth as a stewardship condemns yet more explicitly and severely the vice of covetousness. Covetousness views the things of the world as constituting the absolute property of their possessor; and encourages the most tenacious hold of them, and the greediest pursuit of them. Covetousness is in the heart of it a witness at once to the infinitude and to the folly of man. Since man is spiritual, having affinity with the divine nature, and is capable of satisfaction only in fellowship with God, the world at its utmost extent is wholly incommensurate with his dignity and capacity. Hence arise the passion of covetousness, the frenzy with which man seeks ever more pro-

prietorship in the world, hoping thus to satisfy his soul, and secure himself against fate, and the bitter disappointment with which he finds that neither can it respond to the claim he makes upon it, nor can he continue his possession of it. He remains in the midst of it unsatisfied, and in the end he is separated from it. Our gentle Lord sums up the verdict of reason upon the covetous man in these words, which are the more terrible, because they are so brief and cold, "Thou fool!" (Luke xii. 15-21).

Covetousness occurs continually in the warnings of the New Testament as a vice of soul, wholly inconsistent with the relation of the Christian to God as his Father (Ephes. v. 3; Col. iii. 5; Heb. xiii. 5). Wealth, then, is neither to be eschewed as evil, nor greedily grasped as the sole good. It is to be recognised for what it is, and used accordingly. Wealth is a mighty power in the world. It enters as a potent influence into the progress of the Kingdom of God. It is an instrument whereby the glory of God may be advanced in the material and moral progress of communities and of individuals. It is, therefore, not only legitimate, but right to endeavour to add to the wealth of the world, and even to seek it as one of the issues of labour.

The accumulation of wealth in the hands of a Christian will, no doubt, be restrained by the

principles which regulate the prosecution of his business; but it may often happen that the force and uprightness of his character secure success even in the low financial sense, and an accumulation of money takes place in his hands. Then his position becomes one of grave responsibility, demanding high moral qualities, self-control, which shall restrain him from lavish or vain-glorious expenditure, generosity, which shall imitate the philanthropy of God (Tit. iii. 4) and fidelity, the supreme virtue of stewards (1 Cor. iv. 2), which shall direct him in the conscientious use of every penny with which God has entrusted him. The rich man who thus handles his wealth, will surely not lose the praise of "the faithful and wise steward." At the same time, it is a position of serious peril. The very nature of accumulated wealth tends to bind the possessor to earth, to make him think more of the seen and temporal than of the unseen and eternal, and to create in him a hard and loveless heart. The only antidote to such a temper of mind is poverty of spirit. This grace is to be cultivated by every exercise of soul which empties a man of pride, and casts him as a needy sinner upon the mere mercy of God; and by the ascetic discipline of life, limiting luxury, and curbing display, with a view to more ample disbursement upon the needs of men. The New Testament, therefore, while

never condemning wealth, has many solemn warnings addressed to those who desire it or have it (Matt. vi. 19-21, 24; Mark x. 23, 24; 1 Tim. vi. 17; James v. 1-5).

Suppose, however, that after diligent and conscientious labour, the financial result is meagre, no more than a bare maintenance, unrelieved by any margin for ease or luxury, often threatening to leave the worker, and those dependent on him, poverty stricken and in want; suppose even that through want of work, or some wide commercial disaster, a Christian is brought into circumstances of extreme penury, what form in such a case must Christian duty assume? Such cases are by no means rare. Large numbers of our fellow-Christians live in material conditions which are hard and unlovely, often painful and distressing. How far such a state of matters within the commonwealth is due to discoverable and removal causes, is to be determined by wise statesmanship, supported by enlightened and Christianised public opinion. Meantime, the utmost sympathy, finding such expression as tender wisdom can devise, is the right of all who find life a severe and unending struggle. The ultimate explanation of poverty is to the Christian the disciplinary love of God; his deepest comfort in the experience of it is repose in the love which can make no mistakes, and shall never fail (Heb. xiii. 5-6); his greatest inspiration,

the fellowship of Him whose poverty is the condition of our wealth (2 Cor. viii. 9).

No financial loss can touch those real gains of work to which we have already alluded, or mar the genuine success which all true work achieves. Rather does adversity add elements of yet higher value to the wealth of the soul. The prosperous man, even when virtuous and well-intentioned, will scarcely avoid a certain light-heartedness and obtuseness of sympathy. At the best he is spectator of griefs he never bore. Of higher spiritual quality is the chastened soul, deep and intelligent in sympathy, meek in spirit, grave, serious and kind.

In the school of loss such acquirements as these may be gained: humility, that yields all to God (1 Peter v. 6); patience, that waits unwearied upon God and bears in sweet submission all that He sends (Rom. v. 3; 2 Cor. i. 6; 1 Thess. i. 3); contentment, that remains with undisturbed inner peace amid care and anxiety, and has enough, whatsoever the poverty of its lot may be (Phil. iv. 6, 7, 10-12). It would be infinite pity to miss the privileges which the discipline of poverty is fitted to secure. The gains of poverty may, through want of faith, be turned into losses far worse than those of money and comfort. A proud angry spirit, an impatient and bitter resentment against circumstances and against man and God, a restless harassed murmuring heart, make the shadows of poverty an

intolerable gloom. The antidote is to be found in glad appropriation of Christ, who is in Himself our sufficiency, with whom God gives us freely all things (Rom. viii. 32). Blessed is he to whom this testimony is borne by the Spirit of God: "I know thy poverty; but thou art rich" (Rev. ii. 9). The prayer of Agur has been much praised (Prov. xxx. 8, 9). It betrays, however, an inadequate conception of the restraining and upholding grace of God. The higher Christian aspiration is to belong so completely to God, that in any circumstances of life we shall possess Him and be possessed by Him, and be freed from all care save that of serving Him.

"Lord, it belongs not to my care
Whether I die or live;
To love and serve Thee is my share
And this Thy grace must give.

* * * * * * *

"Christ leads me through no darker rooms
Than He went through before;
He that into God's Kingdom comes
Must enter by this door."

CHAPTER III.

SOCIAL RELATIONS.

As soon as we pass out of the home, and enter into the world to do the work of life, we find ourselves in the company of our fellow-men each busy in this sphere of action. We stand in the midst of a vast and complicated human environment. Every day we are brought into contact with our fellow-men. By our speech and behaviour, by our very presence, we make some impression upon them, as they also by similar means do upon us. At once the question of our attitude and behaviour toward them rises into intense practical importance. Here our Christian character will most directly and completely manifest itself. By far the largest part of Christian morality concerns itself with our conduct in these varied, intricate, and delicate social relations.

The Christian view of the relationship in which we stand to one another is summed up in the term brotherhood. Christianity declares men to be brothers in virtue of their common humanity. They are "made of one blood" (Acts xvii. 26).

The assertion of the principle of individuality, so strangely, grotesquely, and tragically made in the epoch of the French Revolution, is included in the Christian doctrine of man. Christianity, however, traces the brotherhood of men to a yet deeper root. It views men as comprehended in the unity of one common need, and one universal mercy (Rom. xi. 32). In the light of the Cross of Christ all distinctions of race or creed, sex or rank, vanish away. There is left only mankind, lost by sin, redeemed by grace, each man linked to every other by the fact of one common redemption. Christianity entered upon a world, seamed and torn with divisions, Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, bond and free, male and female, and proclaimed a spiritual unity in which these were lost, and replaced by the intimate fellowship of one brotherhood (Col. iii. 11; Rom. x. 12; Acts xv. 9; Gal. iii. 28). Selfishness is slow to admit a fact so subversive of its aims; and nations and individuals are lamentably slow to realise the moral order involved in the faith they profess. The assertion in terms of Creation and Redemption, of the Brotherhood of man, is as necessary now as when Christianity entered on its conflict with heathenism. The law of the relationship thus established is given in the very nature of its constitution. It is formed by love, infinite and divine. Love, therefore, lies as an

obligation upon each member of this spiritual organism toward every other. This is the supreme duty, which comprehends all others (Rom. xiii. 8). If it be enquired how much love, or of what kind and degree, the answer of the New Testament is two-fold. The standard of love is stated as being self-love, and also the love of Christ.

The first of these ideals of love is stated in that summary of the Law which Christ accepted as correct (Luke x. 27, 28), and which he also proclaimed as his own interpretation of man's duty to man (Mark xii. 28-34). It is also compendiously expressed in what is known as the Golden Rule (Matt. vii. 12). It means that we are to be regulated in our relation to others, by the conception which, in the light of what Christ has done for us, we have come to understand as our highest welfare. Nothing lower than this is to be the aim of love's action toward our brethren. The second of these ideals is definitely prescribed by Christ to His disciples (John xiii. 34; xv. 12, 17) and is echoed throughout the New Testament (Ephes. v. 2; 1 Thess. iv. 9; 1 Peter i. 22; 1 John iii. 23; iv. 20, 21). It is plain that these two are one. The aim of Christ's love to us, and the aim of our own love for ourselves, when we enter intelligently into the purpose of God's grace, are identical. This love, therefore, such love as we have to ourselves, the very love wherewith Christ

loved us, is laid on all the redeemed as the debt they owe to their fellow-men.

The result of obedience to this law of love is our own self-realisation. The paradox of the Christian life is that our highest welfare can never be gained when it is made a separate object of pursuit. Our own highest interests are bound up with our fellow-men, and are attained only when they are subordinated to those of our brethren of mankind. Selfishness in things spiritual is an offence against redeeming grace, against our brother's need, and against our own life. Of this implication of one man's welfare with that of his neighbour, even the Old Testament had a glimpse (Prov. xi. 24, 25). In the New Testament it becomes the regulative principle of the relations in which men stand to one another. Our welfare waits on the welfare of others. Neither can we be made perfect without them, nor they without us. We achieve God's highest design for ourselves, when we seek it for others.

The principle of love, quickened into life by the Holy Spirit, becomes the fruitful source of all social virtues. So closely are these clustered together that it becomes impossible in action to separate them, and scarcely possible in studying them to determine their limits. They come into view according to the various aspects in which our fellow-men present themselves to us. It is one

branch of the work of the pulpit, to describe them, and present them to the Christian as elements in the likeness of Christ; and they invite the careful study of all who honestly enter into the everlasting purpose of God, which will not be fulfilled in us, till we are conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. viii. 29). Here little more can be done than to name the more outstanding, and leave the development of them to special exposition and private meditation. Consider then, our fellow-men under these aspects:—

1. **Their Rights.**—Greek morality had no conception, save in the later Stoic philosophy, of the dignity of man as such. It attributed to the citizen of a free Greek state high dignity and inalienable rights; but to slaves and foreigners it offered no rights and no protection. New Testament morality springs from the profound conception of the absolute worth of the individual man, which is measured by the fact that he is the object of the infinite love of God. The conception of personality, sacred and inviolable, is the gift of Christianity to the moral ideas of mankind. The rights of man, therefore, are at once widened and deepened, and made holy to eyes that have learned to look upon men as sacred, and to hearts that have begun to feel for them the love of God. We see this in the New Testament treatment of virtues which are recognised in the Greek

morality, as in that of every community which has emerged out of the confusions of savagery into the orderliness of established law.

(1) *Justice.*—From the merely legal point of view, Justice consists in giving to every man that which is his. In the second table of the Decalogue, the fundamental rights of man are enumerated, his life, his honour, his property, his good name. These are to be held sacred.

Even in the Decalogue a higher than a merely legal view is taken of the fulfilment of these fundamental principles of right; and it is indicated that there is required for true justice or righteousness more than a performance of certain outward actions.

This higher conception is emphasised in the moral teaching of Jesus; and the widening and intensifying of the demands of righteousness is illustrated in His treatment of the duties of the second table in the sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 21-32). Justice, accordingly, in the New Testament idea of it, is not merely an abstention from depriving our neighbour of what is his, nor even a conceding to him of what law assigns to him. It implies, negatively, that we are never to treat him, or anything that is his, merely as means to our own advantage; and, positively, that we are always to regard his personality, and all that enters into his personal life, as being as sacred as our own persons and possessions are to our-

selves, and as much demanding our care to defend and maintain them.

We are thus to be just in all our relations to our fellow-men. We are to be just toward them in thought; our view of them will affect our conduct towards them, and must be scrupulously fair and accurate, uninfluenced by favour, unwarped by prejudice. We are to be just toward them in word; our expressed estimates of them have always, however little we may intend it, an effect upon their position and welfare, and must be well-weighed and studiously correct, the result, not of mere impulse or feeling, but of proved experience. We are to be just toward them in action; our dealings with them affect them either advantageously or disadvantageously, and must be so adjusted as never to injure, but always to further their welfare. This being the true idea of justice, the opposition often expressed between justice and generosity is reduced to a vanishing point. It can never be right to be generous at the expense of justice, as when a man gives presents out of what is not properly his; and it can never be just to stop at limits beyond which a true and wise generosity would dictate to us to go. Love is a debt; and it is only justice to pay our debts. Love is "a debt which they who are ever paying are best contented still to owe."[1] Justice, accordingly, covers the

[1] Trench on the Good Samaritan.

whole field of action toward our fellow-men. Any failure in the duty of love toward them does them injustice, and leaves us unjust (Rom. xiii. 7, 8).

Justice, which is our duty towards those with whom we have special dealings, is also a cause whose maintenance is laid upon every man as a member of the social organism. Unless justice prevail, no man's personality is safe, and society falls back into anarchy. The Christian law of love does not suggest that we should not defend ourselves or others against injustice. On the contrary, it impels us to stand for justice as the condition under which alone human welfare can be advanced. Our Lord's example presents cases, in which He displayed the noblest zeal on behalf of justice, as when He cleansed the Temple, or protested against the iniquity of his trial (John ii. 13-17; Matt. xxvii. 12; Luke xxii. 52, 53, 67, 68; John xviii. 20-23). Justice is not sufficiently safe-guarded by courts of law or the State executive. It is committed as a sacred charge to all the citizens, and especially to those who realise the sacredness of human personality, and the urgency of the law of love.

(2) *Truth.*—It is absolutely essential to human welfare that the truth be known. Love, therefore, comes to the aid of law, and declares truth as well as justice to be part of the debt we owe to our fellow-men. In all our social relations, in business

transactions, in ordinary intercourse and the daily contact of man with man, truth is absolutely necessary, and must be scrupulously rendered one to another. Our fellow-men have this absolute claim upon us that we should tell them the truth, and that we should present to them the truth in speech, action, and behaviour. Falsehood, exaggeration, an unreal or conventional manner, unsound workmanship, sham, shoddy, veneer of every description, are violations of our fellow-men's right to the truth. We are bound never to mislead them in their pursuit of their advantage. We are always to aid them in understanding fact, and gaining such apprehension of truth and reality as shall be for them a basis of judgment, and guide in action. Truthfulness is an essential note of the redeemed character which has left its bad past behind it and is pressing toward the goal of Christlikeness (Col. iii. 9, 10). It is the element in which those who are members one of another live and act together (Ephes. iv. 25). Falsehood strikes at the root of moral and spiritual life, makes moral growth impossible, excludes from the Kingdom of God, and is the special work of the enemy of mankind (John viii. 44). It brings upon the soul that is corroded by it the final doom of separation of God and everlasting death (1 Tim. i. 10; Rev. xxi. 27). Love, therefore, according to the New Testament, prescribes truth.

The question is often debated—does love ever prescribe falsehood? Many peculiar and distressing cases of conscience have arisen through a supposed conflict between the duties of love and truth. The case of war may be dismissed. It is essentially a subversion of all moral relations; and stratagem and falsehood are among the consequences of the profoundly immoral situation. The case of conventionality and etiquette presents no difficulty to an educated conscience. It is never necessary to be rude. It is always possible to speak the truth in love (Ephes. iv. 15). It is never right to utter or imply a falsehood, either to avoid hurting the feelings of another,[1] or to create a favourable impression regarding ourselves. We may be thankful that the case of persecution does not now arise with us. Many a soul, at once loving and true, must have been in sore straits when called on to give evidence when the life of a beloved friend was at stake. Yet even here, truth is supreme. The highest welfare of those persecuted for righteousness' sake is not preservation of the body, but the sanctification of the soul; and this would be hindered by falsehood. Better that the beloved suffer or die than be rescued by a lie. Cases in which someone dear to us is exposed to the consequences of wrong-doing, from

[1] *Cf.* Incident of Duke of Wellington told in Smiles' "Character," p. 205.

which a lie told by us would rescue them, may arise, and require clear insight and prompt action. Two studies in literature present different modes of dealing with such a situation. Jeanie Deans will not tell a lie to save her sister's life, but she will hazard her own in a long and perilous journey to secure her sister's pardon. Desdemona, to save her husband's honour, dies with a lie upon her lips.

> *Othello.* She's, like a liar, gone to burning hell;
> 'Twas I that killed her.
> *Emilia.* O, the more angel she,
> And you, the blacker devil.

There can be no doubt, Jeanie Deans was right and Desdemona was wrong. The highest welfare of the person beloved in each case demanded the truth. The truth is the only medium in which a soul can grow.

The most common case of all is that of sickness. Is it permissible to tell a person who cannot possibly recover, that he certainly will, in order that he may hope, and that hope may prolong his life? Is it permissible to give a sick person, who is anxiously asking a question, *e.g.* as to the health of a friend who is ill, a false answer, lest by telling him the truth he may be injured? A recent writer answers in the affirmative, and maintains that in such cases we owe a higher duty than truth.[1] I venture to think differently, while allowing the

[1] Newman Smyth, "Christian Ethics," p. 395.

extreme difficulty and pain of the case in question. I cannot think that any outward circumstance, such as bodily sickness, deprives a person of the sanctity of his personality, of which a right to have the truth told is part. Our aim in dealing with the sick is still their highest good, and to that, truth is always essential. It is possible that death might be hastened, but how can we tell that death is not the highest good for the person whom we love? In any case, it seems to me fair and right in view of the debt of love that the whole situation into which a divine providence has brought the sick person should be made plain to his eyes, or at least that it should in no way be misrepresented to him. What was said above (pp. 107-109) on the education of conscience is in point here. We do not get formulæ from God for every case. But there may be bred within us by His Spirit through use of fit means an instinct of righteousness which will not fail us in cases of perplexity. Duties cannot conflict with rights, nor duties with duties. There is a point of view for every case, whence right may be perceived, and there is an education and inspiration of God for every such time of need to enable us to see the right and do it.

(3) *Honour.* — In Greek morality, a man had a claim to honour, only if he were a Greek, and not a slave or a barbarian. In New Testament morality, a man has a claim to honour because he

is a man, made in the image of God, redeemable whatever his degradation of position or character may be (1 Peter ii. 17). Of the duty of paying honour to humanity we find the highest illustration in the example of Christ. The outcast and the leper, the harlot and the publican, He treated with the most perfect courtesy, paying honour to that in them which He had come to seek and to save. We are, therefore, to measure men by what Christ thought it worth His while to do for them, and by what He is able to make of them. We are to honour humanity in the person of the vilest specimen of the race, and are to see Christ in the most worthless of those for whom He died. Our fellow-men, therefore, have a right to respect as well as to justice and truth. Love is a debt of honour. The respect we are to feel for our fellow-men must be expressed in our mode of speech and behaviour toward them. Good manners are not a piece of meaningless conventionalism, which a man will show his manliness by neglecting. They enter into the sphere of duty, and form an element of a genuine Christian character. Mrs Hutchinson's characterisation of her husband presents a noble instance of how a Christian gentleman paid love's debt of honour. "I cannot say whether he were more truly magnanimous or less proud; he never disdained the meanest person, nor flattered the

greatest; he had a loving and sweet courtesy to the poorest, and would often employ many spare hours with the commonest soldiers and poorest labourers; but still so ordering his familiarity, that it never raised them to a contempt, but entertained still at the same time a reverence and love of him."[1]

Rudeness is a violation of the law of love, an injury to others, which we have no more right to do them than we have to inflict upon them any other wrong whatever. The roots of rudeness are self-love, and self-conceit, lovelessness towards others, and contempt of humanity which is dishonour to God. The inspiration of courtesy is brotherly love (1 Peter iii. 8). Courtesy includes a lovely circle of virtues and graces: kindness, a genuine desire to be of service; gratitude, a glad recognition of services rendered; deference to the character, wishes, and opinions of others; modesty, a fine reticence upon our individual achievements; tact, the faculty of saying and doing the right thing at the right moment in the best possible way. The duties of courtesy often prescribe actions apparently trifling; but they are never in reality trivial. To speak respectfully, to listen quietly, to reply calmly, to do some little service which in some slight way shall relieve another's burden, to open a door for

[1] Quoted in Smiles' "Character," p. 236.

a lady, to take the outside of the pavement for her, to give a cordial greeting to an acquaintance, are small matters, but they enter into the completeness of the Christian character. We do not all belong to the peerage or the landed gentry; but we all belong to the *gens*, or family of God, and, therefore, all may be in the noblest sense gentlemen, and gentlewomen.

2. **Their Necessities.**—While we thus stand toward one another in a position of relative independence, with rights which it is love's task to hold sacred and maintain inviolate, we are also bound together in the fellowship of reciprocal need.

We depend upon one another in such a complex and intricate manner, that no man, however proud and independent, however rich and increased in goods, can stand aloof from his fellows and say: I have no need of you. Love enters into this fellowship of common need, and constitutes us the ministers of its relief. The duties of love in this aspect of our social relations are summed up in the Scriptural title of Goodness (Gal. v. 22; Ephes. v. 9).

In the first place, we are to entertain for our fellow-men a feeling of unaffected and unconstrained kindness. Kindness is distinguished in the New Testament from Goodness (*e.g.* in Gal. v. 22) as a power or potency is distinguished from an

active energetic principle. Kindness is a disposition of heart and mind toward men in their manifold necessities, sorrows, and weaknesses. It is essential to true love (1 Cor. xiii. 4). The character from which it is absent is crude and immature, however strong and virtuous it may otherwise be. As we ripen towards the fulness of Christian life we learn to place an ever-increasing value on kindness, and to seek to cultivate it more and more in ourselves. Censoriousness, readiness to find fault, to put the worst conceivable construction upon men and their actions, acridity and sharpness of speech to and of others, are all offences against the love which is always kind, and must be peculiarly grievous to the spirit of the gentle Saviour. Self-examination which detects only transgressions of law or confesses only general sinfulness, and omits failures in the duty of kindness, is ill-conducted, leads to inadequate repentance, and secures only incomplete restoration and communion with God.

Kindness is in no way tainted with intellectual imbecility. It takes the best possible view of men and things; it enters into the situation which it studies, and estimates it from within, and so pronounces judgment. In so doing it is not false and erring; rather is it wise and right. Kindness is the condition of right judging of others, and right conduct toward them. This is finely expressed in

some places of Amiel's Journal: "Charity—goodness — places a voluntary curb on acuteness of perception; it screens and softens the rays of a too vivid insight. . . . 'Quench not the smoking flax'—to which I add, 'never give unnecessary pain.' The cricket is not the nightingale; why tell him so? Throw yourself into the mind of the cricket—the process is newer and more ingenious; and it is what charity commands. . . . The truest and best judge, then, is Infinite Goodness, and next to it, the regenerated sinner or the saint, the man tried by experience or the sage. Naturally, the touchstone in us becomes finer and truer the better we are."[1]

In the second place, our kindness of feeling is to issue in Goodness or Beneficence, the active principle of help. Redeemed by love, we become love's agents, ministers, or stewards, dispensing its riches toward all the needy children of men. Our Lord lays this down as the law of His Kingdom, expressly connecting the ministry of love, which He commands us to render to one another, with that which He rendered to us (Matt. xx. 26-28; John xiii. 1-21). In this ministry we are to spend ourselves, and all our endowments and possessions (2 Cor. xii. 15; 1 Cor. xii. 7). The objects of this ministry include all who stand in need of help. It

[1] Amiel's Journal, translated by Mrs Humphrey Ward, pp. 257, 281.

is impossible before undertaking it, to calculate the number of those to whom it may lead us. The universal range of goodness is clearly brought out in the exquisite portraiture of the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke x. 25-37). To the question "Who is my neighbour?" our Lord opposes this other "Who was neighbour to him that fell among the thieves?" Love defines neighbourhood; neighbourhood, in the merely local sense, does not determine the range of love's activity. We are neighbours of all who need our help; and all the needy are our neighbours. Wherever need is, there is neighbourhood, and there goodness finds its work awaiting it. Need never ceases. So long as the world retains the disorder which sin has wrought in it, the need of man will exist, and love's labour will never end; and when sin shall have been eliminated, need, in the forms in which we know it, will indeed pass away, but the inter-dependence of soul on soul cannot cease, and there will be room even in a reconstituted and perfect moral order for love's vocation of service.

The forms, which our ministry will assume, vary with every phase of need. These phases we may classify as:—(1) Physical. Men have a claim upon us for the relief of temporal necessity. Some of Paul's noblest utterances upon the greatness of the gift of God, are to be found when he is pleading

for beneficence of this homely sort (2 Cor. ix. 1-15). Every life lost through want of the necessaries of existence is an indictment against our civilisation, in which every citizen in the community must bear his share. This by no means implies that we are to give so-called charity to every beggar on the street. That is a mere escape from the serious business of relieving the need of our brethren. We must bring to this work warm sympathy, earnest study of the problem before us, careful consideration of the special case presented to us; lest by careless flinging away of money we aggravate the evil we profess to remedy. (2) Moral. There are needs which neither food nor money can meet, which are to be found in their acutest forms in every social grade. Disappointment, loneliness, anxiety, grief of mind, desolation of heart, are elements in the common discipline of life, and loudly, if inarticulately, call for the relief of love. We are "Beggars All" in the matter of human kindness and sympathy. For this end, has God comforted us in our tribulation, that we might be exponents of His tenderness, witnesses to His faithfulness, and distributors of His comfort (2 Cor. i. 4). It is a foolish blindness which sees in men only a body, so that if it be warmed and fed, there is no more that we can do. The personality of the man, of which the body is but the vestment, oftentimes shivers in nakedness, and craves the stimulus

of food. It belongs to the task and to the capacity of goodness, to minister to such needs as these. Even a mind diseased is susceptible of love's remedies. (3) Spiritual. Beyond all else, there is a need and hunger of the soul, which Christ alone can meet and satisfy. Lives which seem full, are empty without His indwelling. Lives which, being empty in the visible sense, are also "without Christ," are poor indeed. We are thus under obligation to make Christ known to all who are ignorant of the Gospel. This obligation can be repudiated only by those who deny that man has spiritual needs, and assert that salvation is not so necessary as food and clothing. To admit that the Gospel is necessary for all, and to refuse the obligation of communicating it to all, is a logical absurdity, and a grave moral fault. This obligation is binding upon all whose own need has thus been met, and can be fully discharged only by individual action (Matt. x. 8).

The relation between benefactor and beneficiary, between those who dispense and those who receive kindness, is peculiarly delicate, and calls for watchfulness on both sides. The giver must respect the personality of him whose need he seeks to relieve Need does not deprive a man of the right to have his honour maintained, and his dignity as a man preserved. Hence all giving must be accompanied with the least possible display (Rom. xii. 8), and

with the least possible obtrusion of the giver's benevolence (Matt. vi. 1-4). The giver must keep ever before him the highest conception of the welfare of him whom he seeks to benefit. Any assistance, financial or otherwise, which would leave the recipient less strong in character, less fit for the work of life, is obviously not a benefit, but an injury. The task of love is not to live the life of others for them, but to enable them to live it worthily, not to make them less than men, but to increase in them the stock of manly excellence. At the same time, the giver must not be staggered or limited in his beneficence by the unworthiness of the recipient. If the need be genuine, it is the duty of love to relieve it. The use, which the recipient makes of the bounty, is his responsibility, not the giver's (Matt. v. 45). Fundamentally, it is love we owe to our needy brother. Mere things or outward actions do not pay the debt of love. Love must take up the things which we possess, and the activities of which we are capable, and use them as channels, whereby to pour itself into the hearts which nothing but love can satisfy.

The duty of the recipient is to respond to the love that flows through these channels. The relation between giver and receiver is sacred, and may be most blessed on both sides. The giver has the greater happiness, since it is more blessed

to give than to receive. The receiver does not grudge him this, however, recognising the love which has prompted the gift, and honouring it as a rill from the infinite fountain of the divine love. He responds to the love, which he receives, with answering love; and where love is the link in the relationship, he who gives is kept from pride, and he who receives is delivered from bondage. To bestow gifts without love is intolerable tyranny. To receive the gifts of love without loving in return, is not to vindicate the dignity of independence, but to betray baseness of nature, alike unworthy and incapable of love.

3. **Their Offences.**—The duties we have hitherto mentioned belong to the natural relations of men, and may be studied apart from the question of sin. We have now to look upon our social relations as they have been directly affected by moral evil.

Sin, which is the assertion of self against God, has entered into human society, and broken up its natural bond, setting man against man in the rivalry of conflicting interests. Redemption, which is the reconciliation of man to God, enters into society as a healing influence, to restore its lost unity, and to bind men together in mutual love. The constraint of redeeming love, operating as a moral force within those who have admitted it into their lives, forbids us to meet the pride of

men with a yet more haughty self-assertion, or to take vengeance for their injuries with relentless infliction of penalty. It enjoins upon us an attitude, new and unheard of in the morality of nations, and gives rise to a series of rare and lovely virtues, whose beauty was undreamt of, till the message of redemption was proclaimed to sinners. The originality of New Testament morality is nowhere more conspicuous than in its treatment of the offences of our brethren. Sometimes it has even to invent a new terminology, and often it has to distinguish current phrases with a new meaning. In this department of the moral life, Christian conduct finds its most difficult task, and Christian character reaches its divinest excellence. Among the outstanding virtues of this sphere, we mention five.

1. *Humility* (Ephes. iv. 2; Col. iii. 12; 1 Peter v. 5; Acts xx. 19; Matt. xi. 29).[1] Sin intoxicates with the false sense of independence and self-sufficiency. An experience of God's grace in redemption reveals to man his true position, as one who has forfeited all claim of right, and is dependent for every good thing on the mere mercy of God. It is impossible for one who lives

[1] In all these and in subsequent references, use should be made of the Revised Version. Young's Analytical Concordance will be found most helpful to those who do not read Greek, in distinguishing the precise language of the original.

in the consciousness of redemption to think more highly of himself than he ought to think (Rom. xii. 3). He knows that he had no standing of his own before God, and that he has nothing which he has not received. Self, accordingly, is wholly set aside as an object of worship, to be served at the expense of the interests of others. The place of self is taken by Christ, and by those with whom Christ identifies Himself. Practically, therefore, humility consists in self-abnegation, and the substitution of our fellow-men for ourselves in our esteem and regard. Humility, however, is not to be regarded as anything pale, unreal, or unmanly. It is not a weakness of character, an ignoble self-depreciation, a perpetual undervaluing of our own capacities. In fact, such ostentatious humility is a subtle and peculiarly offensive pride. Humility, which places self last, is combined with a clear perception of the value of the individual personality, a thing so precious that God found it, depraved and degraded though it was, worth the price of blood, even the blood of Christ.

These two, sense of infinite worth, and sense of infinite unworthiness, are combined in the Christian virtue of humility. It is not diffidence, which will decline active service, from a morbid feeling of unfitness, or a sensitive shrinking from being seen. In fact, diffidence is simply self-consciousness ; and

many refusals to render service to others, made in name of modesty, are simply the result of overweening pride. Humility, because it has forgotten self, is consistent with the highest energy, the most conspicuous courage, and the most strenuous activity. It places the interests of others, and the wider causes of God and of humanity, first, as the supreme objects of pursuit, and subordinates to them all the interests of self. It thus enters as an essential element into all good work, and all high achievement. Wherever self enters, the work is to that extent spoiled. Its results may bulk large in the eyes of men, and the doer of it may be exalted in their esteem. But these results are not so great or fine in quality, as they would have been, had humility entered into the energy which achieved them; and we cannot doubt that he, whose diligence and ability secured them, ranks lower in the estimation of God, than many a worker, whose results are less visible to the eyes of men.

Humility is the antidote to envy. The successes of others, their temporal prosperity advancing above ours, or their growth in moral attainment and in Christian experience outstripping ours, present provocations to the jealous resentment of self-love. By maintaining humility in constant efficiency, we are able to look upon the successes of our fellows with even a purer joy than we look upon our own.

Life ceases to be a competition, in which the gain of one is the loss of another; it becomes at once a discipline and a ministry, in which the gain of one depends upon the gain of all, and the joy of one is the joy of all. Rejoicing in the joy of others is not an imitation joy, a cold reflection of joy in our own possessions and attainments; it is the highest and purest type of joy, the mother of our own most real delight. Humility thus keeps us in peace. All those sources of disquietude, which produce within us no noble emulation, but a base desire that others may be no better or greater than ourselves, are cut off; and we are free to follow the path of virtue with diligence and joy. Humility will redeem what the world calls failure, and make it the opportunity of true moral victory. Humility will add beauty to strength, and confer a grace upon prosperity, it were bare and poor without.

(2) *Meekness*; *cf.* in addition to passages referred to above, where it is combined with humility, 2 Cor. x. 1; 1 Tim. vi. 11; Titus iii. 2. Meekness is conjoined with humility, and springs out of it. It presupposes the conviction of personal unworthiness and dependence on grace, which is expressed in humility. Humility implies a true estimate of self in comparison with others. Meekness describes the demeanour which humility assumes in relation to their arrogant or injurious

behaviour. Meekness leaves room for pity in view of the offensive conduct of our fellow-men toward us. Their conduct strikes upon our heart, but finds there a self crucified and mortified, and thus put beyond the reach of evil temper and violent resentment. We are free, therefore, to look upon them with the serene truthfulness, the mild compassion, and the benignant love of a mind kept in perfect peace. Angry retaliation is submerged in the harmony of a soul, from which the disturbing influence of a restless and clamorous pride has been removed. The offensiveness of proud and angry men wastes itself upon the peace which meekness breathes through the spirit, and finds no excuse in the gentleness of speech and manner, in which the quiet heart finds utterance.

Meekness, like humility, is not a mere passivity of the soul, but requires for its maintenance most strenuous energy. It is far removed from cowardice; demanding indeed a high and rare type of courage. It is wholly distinct from apathy or indifference; being always combined with deep insight into the sinfulness of wrong and violence, and a keen sense of personal pain in suffering from them. It is not a mere veil hiding weakness of character. It is the reserve and self-restraint of a richly-endowed personality well aware of its gifts and capacities. By meekness the earth is inherited (Matt. v. 5). It is looked upon, not as

a prize to be contended for, but as a gift to be enjoyed; and so it is truly possessed, not by the self-seeking, even if they have made themselves lords of wide acres, but by the meek, who have conquered the love of self, even if they call no foot of earth their own. By meekness the earth is won for Christ. The rampant pride of men is subdued, not by violence smiting down violence, but by meekness enduring the contradiction of sinners.

Meekness and humility are combined by Jesus in His own consciousness of Himself as Son of Man, giver of rest to all whose burdens He Himself has borne (Matt. xi. 29). They shine forth in His whole ministry of love. He strove not, nor cried, neither was His voice heard in the street. He broke not the bruised reed, neither did He quench the smoking flax. He was courteous and gentle to those whom men deemed it safe or even right to despise. He handled the souls He came to save with the most exquisite delicacy. He never allowed His strength or power or holiness to lessen the tenderness of His dealing. In face of malignant hostility and persistent wickedness, He maintained a steadfast peace. When He was reviled He reviled not again. When He suffered, He threatened not. The source of His calmness and meekness lay deep in God, to whom as the righteous Judge, He trustfully committed Himself.

Even those like Pilate and Herod, whose character and behaviour deprived them of the right of explanatory answer, He did not scornfully denounce, but maintained toward them a silence, which was itself the most solemn rebuke. In this profound meekness of spirit, He did His redemptive work. He went as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. Our irritability and evil temper fall back condemned in presence of Him who was meek and lowly in heart.

(3) Moderation, gentleness, or forbearance (2 Cor. x. 1; Phil. iv. 5; Titus iii. 2; 1 Tim. iii. 3). This virtue is closely allied to meekness, and differs from it chiefly as attaching to the outward action, while meekness as an inner temper of mind belongs to the character as a whole.

It is the opposite of the spirit of self-seeking, which is always asserting the utmost of its legal rights, and is clamorously contentious when these are in the slightest degree impugned or infringed. It is well aware that a legal right may be so exacted as to be a moral wrong. It interprets law from the standpoint of love; and often yields the letter, in order to conserve the spirit. In business relations, in official intercourse, in all positions, where right conflicts with right, this virtue finds its field of exercise. It is strange that men, who in the domestic circle, or the freedom of friendly

society, are loving, gentle, and generous, should often, in matters of business or law, be hard, exacting, and relentless; and it is stranger and sadder still, that men will be restrained by self-interest from violence of speech or behaviour, who, when this motive is absent, display all their native pride and selfishness. They will be suave and polite over the counter, and will bear utmost provocation from a customer, while on some public board, or in a church court, they will exact the utmost tittle of their rights, and fiercely resent even a hint of fancied injury. All such stickling for rights ill beseems those who have been so generously dealt with by God. He knows the frailty of our frame; He remembers that we are dust. He makes large allowance for our ignorance and weakness. He bears utmost provocations, suffers constant infractions of His just claim and does not exact His dues save by the inner compulsion of His Spirit. In like manner our Lord tolerated injury, and would not employ the forces at His disposal to repel it. This note of the divine character ought, therefore, to be repeated in those who daily experience its graciousness.

(4) Patience (Rom. ii. 4; 2 Cor. vi. 6; Col. i. 11; 2 Tim. iv. 2; Heb. vi. 12; James v. 7, 8, 10). Here we have the loveliest bloom and highest fruition of that Christlike temper which we have been tracing through the varied and cognate

forms of humility, meekness, and moderation. Suppose that the untowardness and selfishness of our fellow-men have been expressed in a series of unfriendly acts, some of which may even have reached the height of malignant insult and injury; suppose that we have been enabled to keep ourselves humble, to preserve meekness of mind and demeanour, and have studiously avoided all aggression or retaliation; what remains still to be done or endured in view of obstinately maintained hostility and attack? The answer is to carry out the line of action we have hitherto pursued to its climax in patience and long-suffering. Love suffereth long and is kind. Love endureth all things. Patience under the assaults of men has its root in patience under the discipline of life; and these two are distinguished in the New Testament by different names, though these can scarcely be rendered in English. Those who know God accept all that He sends in deepest submission, in most lowly trust, and wait upon Him with uncomplaining and even joyful patience (Luke xxi. 19; Rom. v. 3; 2 Cor. vi. 4; James i. 3; 2 Peter i. 6; Rev. i. 9).

In Col. i. 11 "patience" refers to our attitude toward God and His providence; "long-suffering" denotes our attitude towards men and their hostility. Enabled to assume this attitude toward God, and kept in it by His Spirit, we are then

enabled to turn toward our fellow-men, and endure the pressure and pain of their enmity, with trust in the wisdom and love which has permitted it, with deep compassion for those guilty of it, and with long quiet endurance even of its worst manifestations. Patience in the sense of enduring discipline cannot of course be ascribed to God; but patience in the sense of long-suffering is His peculiar quality. He has displayed it towards us with a persistency which astonishes and humbles those who have been acquainted with it. It is thus laid upon us as an obligation to reproduce it in our behaviour towards those who grieve us. Patience absolutely prohibits all exhibitions of evil temper (Ephes. iv. 31). It is not the moral weakness of a man too cold to feel injury, too indifferent, or too easy, to resent it. It is the strength of a man whose heart is garrisoned by the peace of God, who, therefore, holds his passions by the throat, and will not suffer them to speak in word or act.

Patience thus preserves the soul from the injury, which an evil temper would work within it. Self, indulged in its resentment, permitted to have vent in irritability, violence, or sullenness, most surely works havoc in the character, depriving it of real efficiency, and hindering its development into the likeness of Christ. Evil temper will destroy the fruits even of devoted and unselfish service, and

will undermine the influence even of noble and generous characters. Patience is, therefore, a necessity of self-preservation, as well as a virtue of our relations with our fellow-men. It is, accordingly, to be carefully cultivated, through personal realisation of the long-suffering of God, and personal communion with Christ, its perfect exemplar and type. Patience, finally, is the condition of our victory over the world, the power by which we extend over it the kingdom of the Crucified. In patience He founded His kingdom; by patience His servants advance His cause. Hence it is that the contradictions, assaults, and persecutions of proud and wicked men are permitted to try the servants of God, that they may be exercised in patience, and grow strong in forbearance and long-suffering. The Church is mightiest, when under the Cross.

(5) Forgiveness. This virtue of our social relations occupies a large space in the moral teaching of Jesus (Matt. v. 43-48; vi. 14, 15; xviii. 21-35; Mark xi. 25, 26; Luke xvii. 3, 4), and is echoed throughout the New Testament (Ephes. iv. 32; Col. iii. 13). Forgiveness, as Christ taught it, was a new discovery in the sphere of morals, rising high above any approaches that had been made to it, whether in Greece or in Israel. Its ground lies in the fact that we have been forgiven. We have been forgiven; our sins have

been visited, not with judgment, but with mercy This fundamental fact of our experience radically changes our relation to our fellow-men. We no longer stand apart from them in the independence of self-righteousness, which claims homage and is permitted to exact penalty. We are united to them in the community of need and of grace. The love that has reached us is for them; and we are to be the channels of its distribution. To stand stiffly upon our rights, to pose as sovereigns whose territory has been invaded, and to proceed to retaliation and revenge, is to sin against the love which found us aliens and rebels and made us fellow-citizens with the saints, members of the household of God. Where redemption is not known, there cannot be forgiveness in the Christian sense. The forgiveness of the Greek proceeded from love of moral ease, and the sense that it was beneath his dignity to prosecute revenge. The forgiveness of the Christian proceeds from a sense of the infinite obligation of redeeming love. It is, consequently, no languid indifference, but a consuming zeal of pity, and manifests itself, not in mere abstention from revenge, but in positive love and yearning over the offender.

In forgiveness the sense of injury to ourselves is lost in perception of the injury the offender has done himself, and in desire to save him from its consequences. For a Christian, whose standing

before God is due to grace, to revert in his dealing with his fellow-men to the standpoint of law is deep inconsistency, and exposes him to severe condemnation. Shakespeare has seized this thought in his drama of *Measure for Measure*, and has given it undying expression:

> "Why all the souls that were, were forfeit once;
> And He that might the vantage best have took,
> Found out the remedy: How would you be,
> If He which is the top of judgment should
> But judge you as you are? O think on that;
> And mercy then will breathe within your lips
> Like man new made."

Since this is the ground of forgiveness, its extent becomes at once apparent. If forgiveness were a mere foregoing of the right of revenge, the question, "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?" would be in point. It would be reasonable to ask how often we should forego this legal right; and a moral teacher would be required to specify the limits. If, however, we are raised altogether above the sphere of law, if forgiveness is not negative, the foregoing of right, but positive, the manifestation of love, the question becomes meaningless. No numerical limit can exist to the exercise of redeeming love. Hence our Lord's answer takes us beyond all numerical calculations: "I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven." There may be offences so deadly that forgiveness is to the human im-

agination inconceivable; but there is no offence which our fellow-man may commit against us which ought not to be forgiven. We must be careful, however, in such cases to secure that our forgiveness is genuine, not produced by mere inability to take revenge, or fear of the consequences of doing so, but rising out of a due sense of the infinite nature of our own trespass against God, and the infinite love that has forgiven us.

The ground of forgiveness regulates also our treatment of the offender. Forgiveness must be prior to all our dealing with him. Dealing, which does not issue from accomplished forgiveness of the offender, cannot be expected to lead up to his repentance and amendment. Two cases here present themselves; the case of the offender being penitent, and that of his being impenitent. The first case is plain and presents no difficulty which may not be overcome through the power that comes from personal sense of forgiveness. We are to forgive from the heart; without reservations, not silently setting conditions of a certain quantity and degree of humiliation on the part of the offender; without hesitation or reluctance, not prescribing a period of probation, and grudgingly doling out fragments of graciousness; without remembrance of the offence, not in form granting forgiveness, while in reality refusing it, by with-

holding the love which is its motive and its strength.

The second case often presents peculiar difficulties which require the utmost sagacity to cope with. The presupposition must always be forgiveness. Forgiveness must precede confession. The impenitence of the offender does not relieve us of the duty of forgiving him, but it gives to the treatment of the offender a special direction. The first principle in our treatment of the impenitent must be a frank disclosure to him of the nature of his offence. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." We are not to pass over his offence, and behave to him as though he had not committed it. That would be to leave him in his sin, unconvinced and hardened. We are to go to him in love, having forgiven him already from the heart, cherishing no ill-feeling, having quenched all anger and resentment, eager to win his soul; and in the privacy of some well-chosen hour we are to tell him of the fault which has made a breach between us and him, and between him and God. Our Lord in laying down this principle implies that success would in the majority of cases follow its honest application. Even in instances where the presumption is that such dealing would be fruitless, we are still to employ it, not perfunctorily or despairingly, but earnestly and hopefully. Not

till we have employed it, ought we to take any other step, or appeal to any other authority to use its constraint with the offender.

Whatever effect this treatment may have upon him, even if it leave him still angry and hostile, the duty of forgiveness remains in its integrity. Forbidden for ever, is any revengeful action, which has no other aim than the gratification of our injured feelings (Rom. xii. 19).

The virtues we have been considering under this head are sometimes designated by the epithet passive. We have noted, however, that this passivity is not weakness, but power, and that the characters in which these virtues are present are the strongest and most influential. This, indeed, is matter of common observation. "Have you never observed the immense power exerted by many Christian men and women whose lives are passed in comparative silence? You know not how it is, they seem to be really doing little, and yet they are felt by thousands. And the secret of this wonder is that they know how to suffer well—they are in the patience of Jesus. They will not resent evil, or think evil. They are not easily provoked. They are content with their lot, though it be a lot of poverty and affliction. They will not be enemies of others. When they are wronged they remember Christ and forgive, when opposed and thwarted, they endure and wait. They live in an element of

composure and sweetness, and cannot be irritated and fretted by men, because they are so much with God, and so ready to bear the Cross of His Son, that human wrongs and judgments have little power to unsettle or disturb them. Now before these a continual flood of influence will be continually rolling. Their gentleness is stronger than the onsets and assaults of other men. They are in the Kingdom of Jesus reigning with Him, because they are with Him in His patience."[1]

The social relations, which we have been considering, are universal and necessary in human life, and the virtues which belong to them must be elements in all Christian character. There are relations, however, which are not determined for us by the necessary circumstances of our lives, but are made for ourselves by our own free choice. Even in reference to these, however, we are not left to our own caprice either in their formation or their maintenance. (1) In the first place, accordingly, we are bound to enter into friendly intercourse with the persons among whom our lot is cast. The lovelessness and selfishness which exclude our neighbours from a share in our affections, and leave them always beyond the circle of our intimate fellowship, is an offence against the spirit of love. Even the claims of family love and the

[1] Bushnell on "The Efficiency of the Passive Virtues" in the vol. of Sermons entitled "The New Life."

satisfying nature of domestic happiness do not justify such exclusiveness and reserve. The duty of hospitality is frequently inculcated in the New Testament (Heb. xiii. 2; Rom. xii. 13; 1 Peter iv. 9). It is true that, in the circumstances of the early church, there were more urgent reasons for the exercise of this grace than there can be in modern society. Christians, whose journey brought them to a strange city, had immediate claim on the protection of their fellow-Christians. Even this aspect of the duty, however, has not wholly disappeared. Especially in our large cities there are great numbers of persons who are strangers, and have a claim on the hospitality of Christian people. A great field of Christian service opens here. Multitudes of young men and women are living lonely in lodgings, exposed to the temptations of city life, who urgently need the consolation and help of a Christian home. Their salvation may depend on their being made welcome to the joys of some pure and bright family circle. It is to be admitted also that much of the so-called hospitality practised in society is unreal, dictated not by love, but by business expediency, and the instinct of self-interest, and takes forms that are ostentatious and frivolous. This does not excuse Christians, however, for withdrawing from the society of their fellow-men. It is still incumbent upon them to widen the bounds of their acquaintance beyond the limit of kindred,

and make their homes the centre of widely spreading kindness.

(2) In the second place, we are bound, if God give us opportunity, to enter into close personal friendship with certain of our fellows. It is possible that our lives may be so ordered that we must be almost entirely alone, cut off from the fellowship of kindred souls. In ordinary circumstances, however, we are placed in such close relations to others that, if we have a loving heart and a discerning spirit, we may distinguish those, between whom and us there is such sympathy as may deepen into strong enduring friendship. Friendship is the glory of the pre-Christian morality. David and Jonathan in Hebrew story, Damon and Pythias in Greek history, stand as types of this most lovely relationship. It is sometimes pointed out with regret, that New Testament morality has little to say of friendship. It is true that it was reserved for a heathen moralist to compose a treatise *De Amicitia*. But it is not true that the New Testament is silent upon the subject. It presents, indeed, the most perfect type of a friend the world has ever seen. In our Lord, we have one who was the Friend of sinners, not merely in the vague sense of a general beneficence, but in the particular and private sense which belongs to genuine friendship. This relationship, which still subsists between Him and each soul that trusts Him finds beautiful

illustration in the friendship which lived between Him and His disciples. This was characterised by all the sincerity and private intimacy which belongs to true human friendship (Luke x. 38-42; xii. 4; John xi. 3, 36; xiii. 23; xv. 13-15; xix. 27). In the circle of the Twelve, there were those who had been friends before they knew Christ, whose friendship now took a deeper and more tender life (John i. 35-51). Paul is remarkable for the circle of his friends who understood him and loved him, upon whom he poured the wealth of his ardent and loving nature. The Christian ages have been glorified by the purest and most exalted friendships; and modern English literature has contributed a deathless eulogy of friendship in Tennyson's great poem *In Memoriam*, which celebrates the poet's friend Arthur Hallam. Friendship depends on sympathy of nature, an affinity, mystic, wonderful, not to be defined, which yet lives and is mighty from soul to soul. Hence it is that friendship is the truer and more powerful, the deeper the sympathy and the higher the ideal in pursuit of which the friends find themselves at one. "Affinity of nature founded on worship of the same ideal, and perfect in proportion to perfectness of soul, is the only affinity which is worth anything."[1]

There arises from this the one great practical

[1] Amiel's Journal, p. 284.

regulation for the choice of friends—never choose as your friend one between whom and yourself there cannot be full accord upon the highest concerns of the spiritual life. If your friendship has been formed before your perception of the claims of Christ was clear, and before your decision was formed, the first duty of your Christian calling, and the first duty of your friendship, is to let your friend know the light that has come to you. If he respond, well; you have gained your friend. If not, your friendship must lack the peculiar intimacy which should be its joy and strength. The duties of friendship include all those, which we have discussed when dealing with social relations in general. A friendship, which failed, *e.g.* in truth, or honour, or kindness, or patience, would soon become extinct. Its master grace, however, is loyalty. Friends must be true to one another. This is wrongly interpreted to mean that we must support our friend even if he is in the wrong, and must never rebuke him when he is at fault; for that would be to betray his highest interests. But it does mean that we are to set him first in our thoughts, to rejoice in his prosperity even more than if it were our own, to defend him from aspersions on his character, to spend means and strength in preserving him from evil, and to be, in things small and great, faithful even, if need be, unto death.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STATE.

In the world of human activity there are many spheres of interest, each of which has its special rules and forms of action. Society thus exhibits a great variety of competing interests, which aggressive selfishness and the fierceness of rivalry might easily convert into intolerable anarchy. There is thus, in the nature of the case, room and need for one all-embracing sphere, which shall include these special centres of interest, and harmonise them into one organic whole. Such a sphere is the State, the totality of the body politic; and this we find existing wherever man has risen above the stage of savagery, and has become aware of higher wants than food and raiment. By the constitution of his nature, man is a "political animal," fitted and destined for life within the complex and ordered realm of the State.

1. **The Nature and Functions of the State.**—When Christianity appeared, as a morally regenerative force, the separate nationalities or

States of more ancient times had well-nigh disappeared before the iron uniformity of the Roman Empire. Hence we find a marked difference between Greek morality and that of the New Testament. Greek moral teaching, in its earlier forms, has much to say of the State, little of the individual. The earlier Greek ideal is that of the citizen devoted to the welfare of the State, and absorbed in its business. His private and domestic life falls into the background. When the New Testament was written, there were no longer separate free states or nationalities to which the citizen could give herself, and in which he could find his life and well-being. In the New Testament, accordingly, comparatively little space is occupied with civic virtues. It has but little occasion to develop the duties of a Christian in reference to the varied relations of political life from which, in point of fact, he was almost entirely excluded. It would be false, however, to say that the New Testament is non-patriotic in tone, or looks with indifference upon civic life, and has no counsel to give on the position and duties of Christian citizenship. In like manner, it would be historically incorrect to say that the early Christians made bad citizens, or avoided the service of the State. Christianity, by the great truths which it has made vital in the moral history of men,

has created a Christian conception of the State, and has given a divine sanction to the life and activities of citizenship. It summons men to exercise the rights and discharge the duties of citizens, as part of the service of God, to which their Christian standing binds them. Christ is King, and the State comes within His dominion. He rules amid the changing incidents of its history, and calls upon His servants to bring the institutions of the State into conformity with His purpose of redemption.

The main function of the State is to maintain and vindicate public right throughout the various departments of human life which are included within its compass. It is not a substitute for them, nor can it do their work. It cannot take the place, for instance, of the family, nor undertake the work of training children to useful and virtuous lives. It cannot take the place of the Church, or perform for the souls of men the spiritual ministry they require. It cannot regulate the whole life of a people, or take the guidance of action from beneath the control of the individual conscience.

It can provide, however, that the conditions be maintained under which a free, intelligent, and moral life can alone be lived. It can secure that no right be violated, and that no individual or class shall invade or encroach upon

the rights of another. It can open the path toward the full development of life and character among all the members of the community, removing every barrier of injustice or oppression, and promoting the unrestricted exercise of all native energy and talent. Individual life, the family, the various trades and classes and social organisations, find in the State their safeguard, within whose shelter they grow in peace towards a ripe and fruitful maturity. The State is a moral organism. We may almost say that it is a moral personality, with a self-consciousness, a conscience, and a history of its own.

Its existence is thus based on the ultimate facts of human nature, which are the work of creative intelligence and power. Its authority is not derived from human device or consent, but is the embodiment and manifestation of the supreme authority of eternal universal right. The particular form which the State may assume will be fixed by the historic circumstances of each particular nation. Since the general aim of the State is to further the realisation of a full personal life among the citizens, we may conclude that the ideal constitution of the State will be democratic, a government "of the people, for the people, by the people." In our own country the movement of constitutional reform has undoubtedly been toward the realisation of this ideal. A wise com-

munity, however, will avoid hasty and speculative revolutions. Radicalism has learnt to study history, and to see that the present grows out of the past. The democracy of Great Britain retains the form of monarchy, which is our inheritance from the past. We are not yet convinced that by so doing we have missed any element of right or liberty which is secured under an avowedly Republican form of government.

The particular functions of the State in carrying out its aim are twofold: legislative, and administrative. By legislation, the laws which are to regulate the relations of individuals and classes are devised and proclaimed with the supreme authority of the State. By administration, these laws are carried into effect and enforced throughout the community. An important branch of administration is the dispensation of justice, by which the law, which expresses and vindicates right in the life of the community, is maintained against all assault and encroachment from whatsoever source arising. "There are laws in Prussia," said the miller of Sans Souci; and the king had to bow before a right which even he dared not violate. Punishment, accordingly, is vested in the State. The rightfulness of punishment is based, not merely on its usefulness in maintaining the safety of life and property, and in reforming the criminal, but on its necessity as the recoil of

law upon the transgressor. It is possible that Capital Punishment might be abolished; but the reason must not be sought in sentimentality, nor so expressed as to derogate from the majesty of law. Hitherto the highest wisdom of men has been unanimous in deciding that for wilful murder nothing less than this is the adequate response of law.

How far the administration of the State should pass beyond the vindication of justice toward the positive amelioration of the lot of individuals within its borders is a question which cannot be settled on merely theoretic principles. The tendency in the present day is certainly to cast more and more responsibility upon the State. Socialism would even urge that the State ought to possess all the means of production within the community, should direct their employment, and distribute the results. Against this may be urged the danger that the State should thus itself violate the rights which it exists to vindicate, and make impossible that full development of personal life which it is bound as its first duty to provide for. An absolute State, even of pure Republican form, might become as grievous a tyranny even as an absolute Monarchy. Practically, every question of State interference of an immediate nature in the activities of the citizens must be determined on its merits, and not by the constraint of a narrow logic, whether individualistic or socialistic. It has

been found well to give to the State the control of the postal service. It might turn out to be beneficial to the railway system were it similarly placed under State management. Education has been regarded since 1870 as a department of State. Other questions await settlement, such as the condition of the poor, and the regulation of the drink traffic; and preponderating public opinion calls for State interference in those matters.

If, however, at any time and on any pretext, the State should begin to deal with men as though they were things to be disposed of by a will other than their own, and controlled by an authority which had no basis in reason or right, it would have contradicted the ground of its own existence, and would have raised against itself the deathless hostility of conscience and of religion.

2. **The Rights and Duties of Citizenship.**— The right of Citizenship within the State belongs to every subject born within its dominions. The claim to full civil and political rights is one which no State can afford to scorn or defy. Three points, however, must be settled before the claim can be intelligible, and the acknowledgment of it practically valuable.[1] In the first place, the rights must be proved. It is vain to claim rights, unless these can be exhibited as inherent in the constitution

[1] See MacCunn's "Ethics of Citizenship," chs. i., iii., iv.; a most wise and helpful book.

of man, and coherent with the general well-being of the community. No man has rights which do wrong to his neighbour. The right to sacredness of person, to freedom of worship, to a share in government through the exercise of a vote, may be exhibited as just and inalienable; but the right to the land, to an old age pension, to the instruments of production, remain still to be proved, and await not only enactment but demonstration. In the second place, rights must be so conceded as to involve no violation of right. At the French Revolution the theory of the rights of man was proclaimed as a Gospel for the evils of the time; and when the golden age did not forthwith return, the theorists who had the direction of affairs filled France with bloodshed and cruelty. How a right, granted to exist, is to come into universal application, is the problem of statesmanship. To its solution must be brought a wisdom, at once conservative and progressive, which is the perquisite of no political party.

In the third place, it must be possible to exercise rights before the possession of them can be more than merely nominal. "To possess rights is not to be a citizen. It is to be merely on the way to become one. . . . Rights are not rewards nor decorations, nor ends in themselves. They are advantages, they are opportunities, they are instruments. And when any man has won them,

this means simply, that henceforth he is set on a vantage ground, from which, secure from aggression, and unrepressed by tyranny, he may begin to do his duty."[1] Prior to all rights, therefore, as preliminary to their use, a man must be placed under conditions in which he may exercise them. He must be a man, if he is to be a citizen. All the elements, which go to make a full human life, must enter into his being. He must have means of sufficient livelihood. He must have a sacred and inviolable home life. He must have opportunity of intellectual development. He must be free to open his mind and conscience to the commanding influence of the will of God. If these opportunities of self-realization be denied him, while the right of citizenship is conferred on him, he is being most cruelly mocked. If he himself neglect them, his citizenship is a barren honour, for which he can offer no vindication, and of which he is in danger of being deprived. Only as he conscientiously uses them, and serves himself heir of all that is best in the history of his own nation and of mankind, does his citizenship become a real and valuable possession, adding dignity and power to his manhood.

The duties of citizenship may be summed up under these three heads—patriotism, obedience, and service.

[1] MacCunn's "Ethics of Citizenship," pp. 45, 46.

1. Patriotism is the first virtue of the citizen. Our Lord Himself is our pattern of this as well as of all other excellences of character. As He weeps over Jerusalem, or mournfully predicts her destruction, we see how the passionate love of the Hebrew for his ancestral land, and for Jerusalem as its crowning glory, lives as a pure flame of pity in the heart of Jesus (Luke xix. 41). The same overmastering devotion to his people is seen in St Paul, whose letters throb with compassion and grief and great yearning over his kindred, and rise to a height where feeling confounds thought and language (Rom. ix. 3).

The feeling which prompts us to love our country, to delight in its familiar scenery, to exult in its past achievements, to thrill at the sight of national memorials, or the national flag, is natural and instructive, and is to be cultivated and elevated. We ought to inform ourselves regarding our national history, and take possession of the accumulated stores of wisdom and truth, of high purpose, and pure and reverent feeling, which are our birthright. We ought to gain an accurate conception of the present position and needs of our country, and should thus make our patriotism no evanescent impulse, but a steadfast resolution, a growing energy of soul. We ought to bring the inspiration of Christianity and the morality of the New Testament, to quicken, purify, and educate

our patriotic sentiment. We are bound to avoid both the moral blindness which would palliate or excuse national transgression, and the gross materialism which concerns itself only about market values and physical comforts. In the cant of the day, Jingoism and Little Englandism designate policies, which, however different in form, are alike in moral quality, and are alike regardless of our national duties and responsibilities. Patriotism in the public life of the citizen corresponds to self-respect in the narrower social spheres. The self we respect is the same and has the same moral worth in others as in ourselves. Even so the humanity we love and serve in persons of our own race, is the same in other races, and claims a like devotion. This does not imply that either individuality or nationality should be obliterated. It would be impossible and undesirable to absorb all nationalities in one universal State. It does bind us, however, to love our neighbours as ourselves; and this fundamental principle of New Testament morality, when applied to the sphere of international politics, implies that nations are members of the organism of humanity, and attain their separate welfare only through the advancement of all.

The desire to advance our own interests as a people, at the expense of the well-being of other races, is as criminal and as futile as the same

conduct would be in the relations of man and man. An enlightened patriotism will always be disinterested and humanitarian. It follows that aggressive war is absolutely criminal, and that in the vindication of international right war must always be the last resort. Even justifiable war, moreover, must always have for its end, not the destruction of the enemy, but the re-establishment of those conditions under which the combatants shall cease to be enemies, and shall become helpers in each other's welfare. National interests are most effectively furthered by the discharge of national duties. Patriotism will find its noblest exercise in quickening the sense of national responsibility, and elevating the conception of the national destiny.

2. The State, being the sphere of public right, has a right to the obedience of its citizens. This is the civic virtue which in the New Testament has the largest place and the strongest emphasis. Under the political conditions of the Roman Empire, there was little left for any citizen to do in reference to the State, save to obey the constituted authorities. Christianity did indeed aim at a stupendous revolution in the lives of men and nations. It proceeded, however, through the recognition of all right whose ground lay in the constitution of man as God had made it. It lays solemn emphasis, therefore, on the authority of

the State, and enjoins even upon those whom the State regarded with suspicion or treated with injustice, the duty of obedience (Rom. xiii. 1-4; 1 Peter ii. 13-17; 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2). The constituted authority has a claim to obedience, not as a human institution, or as vested in certain men, but as the organ of the supreme authority and sovereignty of God, His instrument for upholding right and justice in the land. Obedience, therefore, is to be rendered, not slavishly in immoral subjection to outward constraint, or in unreasoning loyalty to a family or dynasty, but joyfully and reverently, as to God and not to man. We have thus to observe that there are two authorities, the authority of the State and the authority of God (Matt. xxii. 15-22). The authority of the State is held under the authority of God. We are to obey the State under the limits of the obedience we owe to God.

Thus it may happen that we have to disobey man, in order that we may render to God the obedience due to Him (Acts iv. 19; v. 29). There may thus arise conflict of feeling, producing great perplexity of mind and keen pain of heart. Men may find themselves torn between love of a person or dynasty on the one hand, and reverence for the right on the other. Even in such cases, however, there is no real conflict of duty. The authority of man is valid, only when it agrees with the will of

God. If it conflict with the will of God, we are bound to disobey it, and endure such consequences as the civil power may inflict upon us. The question here arises, are we never to do any more than suffer? Are we to allow a tyrant to oppress us, without defending ourselves, or bringing force to cope with the force so unjustly constraining us? In these days, the question is happily not a practical one.

There have been times in the history of our country, however, when it did demand instant solution. After the Reformation in 1560, Mary, Queen of Scots, arrived to take possession of her ancestral throne. She did so, fully determined to reign as an absolute monarch, to make her subjects obey her will simply because it was hers, and in particular to overthrow the reformed faith, and replace it by the Papacy. Here then was a clear issue, the authority of God speaking in His Word, or the authority of the earthly sovereign. The nobles might hesitate; but John Knox and the Scottish people had no doubt of the course required of them. They must oppose the Queen. If it should appear that she was finally opposed to the will of God, and the cause of right, they would be released from the vow of obedience to her will, and would find themselves compelled to take from her the authority she had abused. In the interviews between Knox and the Queen,

in which the history of the period is as it were condensed, this issue is stated with a clearness which astonishes us when we remember that the interlocutors were Prince and subject. "'Think ye,' quoth she, 'that subjects, having power, may resist their princes?' 'If their princes exceed their bounds,' quoth he, 'Madam, and do against that wherefore they should be obeyed, it is no doubt but they may be resisted, even by power.'" This was new to one nursed in the traditions of absolute power, and the Queen, "stood as it were, amazed more than the quarter of an hour." "'Well, then,' she resumed, 'I perceive that my subjects shall obey you and not me.' 'God forbid,' he replied, 'that ever I take upon me to command any to obey me, or yet to set subjects at liberty to do what pleaseth them. But my travel is that both princes and subjects obey God, who commands Queens to be nurses unto His people.'"[1]

Revolution is, in fact, comparable to divorce. Marriage is already dissolved, when one or other of the persons united in it so acts as to destroy the moral conditions of the union; and divorce gives effect to the dissolution. In like manner, when the rulers have already dissolved the bond between them and their subjects by perverting the function of the State, and making it serve,

[1] *Cf.* Taylor Innes' "John Knox," ch. vi., The Conflict with Queen Mary.

not the will of God or the cause of right, but some scheme of class or dynastic aggrandizement, revolution becomes not permissible merely, but necessary as bounden duty. To quote again from one of these interviews between Knox and Queen Mary: "'Will ye,' said she, 'that they shall take my sword into their hands?' 'The sword of justice, Madam,' he answered, 'is God's; and if the magistrate will not use it, the people must do so. And, therefore, it shall be profitable to your Majesty to consider what is the thing your Grace's subjects look to receive of your Majesty, and what it is ye ought to do unto them by mutual contract. They are bound to obey you, and that not but in God. You are bound to keep laws unto them. You crave of them service: they crave of you protection and defence against wicked doers.'"

Within the scope of the will of God, as expressed in His Word, obedience to the law of the land is part of our Christian duty. Transgression of law is crime. Probably few, who make a credible profession of Christianity, ever attempt direct breach of law. Evasions of law, however, are sometimes looked upon as permissible. The State is looked on as an enemy, whom it is allowable to circumvent; and persons who, in social relations, pass for honourable and kindly men, will cheat the revenue by a little mild smuggling, or a few skilful omissions when they fill up a schedule. It need hardly be

said that such conduct is criminal, immoral, and degrading.

3. The State is the sphere within which a moral life is possible. From the State we have received life and nourishment. To the State, therefore, we owe loyal and willing service. "For each society as it offers us its privileges asks of us our service, our reverent and loyal devotion to its welfare, our surrender, for its sake, of private aims and preferences; it asks us to keep up in our generation that which has been finest, greatest, worthiest in the past."[1] There may come times in the history of a nation when the citizens are required to lay on the altar of the national existence strength, wealth, life itself. Against the claim of the State, in the supreme crisis of its history, no claim of property or even of life can avail. So it was in the Netherlands, when a whole people offered itself a living sacrifice for freedom, truth, and justice, and counted devotion even to death no more than a reasonable service. It might be that a time, well-nigh as terrible, might come even to us as a good and perfect gift, if we ever were sinking into neglect of duty, forgetfulness of right, or pusillanimous love of wealth or ease. Better for any nation to be as the Netherlands, drenched in blood, than to be as Spain triumphing in unrighteous force, and ultimately cast, as it is at this day, in God's contempt, aside.

[1] "Studies in the Christian Character," by Dean Paget, p. 205.

Apart from these great eras of history, the service, which, as citizens, we owe the State, is great and continuous. We are bound, in the widest sense, to work for the State in whatever lot of life providence has set us. No man ought to be a consumer merely. All ought to be producers, contributing by hand or brain to the stock of national wealth. The wealth of the nation is no inexhaustible quantity. It always stands within "measurable distance of exhaustion," being never, so we are told, more than five or six times our annual production. He that will not work, therefore, is, in reality whatever he may be in law, a pauper, fed out of that which does not belong to him, depriving others of the means of livelihood. He may live in a palace, or a poor-house, the same moral quality attaches to him. The State can reach the man in the poor-house. It is not so easy to lay hands on the man in the palace; but there can be no doubt of his moral obligation to serve the State by his labour.

More directly, we are bound to give our aid to all worthy public causes. Public spirit is one aspect of that love of our neighbour which is the essence of Christianity. The hospitals which shelter our sick, the colleges and schools which educate our youth, the buildings which are required for uses of government, and all institutions which aid the development of industry, science, and art, have a claim upon our support. An honourable pride in the city

wherein we dwell, an eager desire to see it more fair and prosperous, and a willingness to serve it in any capacity open to us, are marks of a true Christian citizen. It is sometimes urged that great public institutions ought to be directly managed by the State, the funds necessary for their support being raised by taxation. Special cases must be treated on their merits. But in general we ought to be very careful lest we lose more than we gain, and pay for State support the price of loss of public sentiment, of stimulus to generosity and of individual concern in great causes.

Service of a statutory kind we are also bound to render. There are necessities of the State, such as the expenses of government, of national defence, and of the dispensation of justice, which can only be met by taxation; and there are necessities of the lesser civic communities, the parish or the city or county, which can only be provided in a similar way. This taxation we are to bear loyally, not as a burden laid on us by an alien power, but as the obligation of good citizens, taking their share in the furtherance of the common weal. Among the continental nations, conscription prevails, and direct military service has to be rendered by the citizens. There can be no doubt, on the one hand, of the miseries of such a system; and we are happy in escaping them; but there can be none, on the other hand, of the right of the State to claim it, if it be

found necessary. In the meantime, we shall do well, by fostering our Volunteer forces, to make conscription unnecessary. Let young men voluntarily fit themselves for warlike services, the necessity for which is always a possibility; so shall the evils of compulsion be avoided.

The highest service which the State requires of its subjects is participation in the government of the country. Such participation is directly effected by the vote of the citizens electing their representatives to Parliament, and to the other lesser governing bodies throughout the country, such as town councils, parish councils, or school boards. The right to such participation has been almost completely won among us. The point to be insisted on now is not the right, but its correlative duty. We are bound to send into Parliament and other similar bodies men competent for the task of deliberation and decision in reference to the public weal. Here the duty of the Christian to exercise his influence and record his vote becomes most apparent. Abstention, on the ground of spirituality, is a mischievous error of judgment, if it be not a hypocritical excuse for selfish indifference to the welfare of others. Every Christian man who has a vote ought to use it. The government of our country, spite of monarchical forms, is essentially democratic. In the making of national history every citizen has a share, and for national

actions every citizen has individual responsibility. For the due discharge of his duty in this respect the citizen must prepare himself by intelligent study of the problems which arise, and by the application to them of Christian principle. He is not a citizen merely when he votes. He is to make his vote the issue of clear thinking and worthy living. He is at the same time bound to aid in the preparation of his fellow-citizens for the same crowning act of citizenship. The vote is the outcome of public opinion, in the formation of which each citizen ought to bear an intelligent part. The man in the street governs the British Empire. The good government of the Empire, the worthy discharge of national duty, and the high place of our country amid the peoples of the earth depend, therefore, upon the educated intelligence, the trained thought, and sound moral judgment of the masses of the community. To maintain public opinion at a high intellectual and moral level is, therefore, the duty of every private citizen. To give it expression, to enforce it, and guide it, through the medium of the public press, is a most honourable and most important calling.

The due fulfilment of our duties as citizens is not only beneficial to the State, but is most helpful to ourselves in confirming and ennobling our Christian character. It affords a practical means of escape from the tyranny of self-interest. The

gravest moral danger of our time is not dogmatic atheism, nor even sensual vice; though neither of these is far to seek. Rather does it lie in the prevailing love of ease, physical comfort, and pleasure and recreation. Men grow absorbed in their narrow personal and domestic concerns. They are busy in making a livelihood, and accumulating, if possible, a fortune. They bring all religious and political questions to the test of money. They have a cynical disbelief in all motives except such as are selfish, and in all causes which do not aggrandise some class or party. They lose the capacity of generous admiration, unselfish enthusiasm, and devoted service. Comfort eats out their heart. They are not vicious; but they are plunged in a "virtuous materialism." Deliverance will be greatly aided by a conscientious realization of citizenship. In the service of the State, men will be lifted out of themselves, inspired with motives that are not selfish, and taught to find their highest individual advantage in the furtherance of the public weal.

As Athens and Venice were to their citizens in the olden time the objects of all-absorbing devotion, so our country ought to be to us the object of deep and passionate love. Our Christianity will have no other effect upon our patriotism than that of elevating its ideal and widening its scope.

The service of the State, thus viewed, is part of

the service we owe to Christ our King. To obey the laws, to aid all worthy civic causes, to govern in the interests of righteousness, is to enthrone our Lord, as King of Kings, and to extend His Sovereignty till the kingdoms of the earth are His.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHURCH.

THE Kingdom of God is established in the midst of this present world. The sovereignty of Christ extends over every department of human life. In the spheres of action, which we have been considering in these pages, we serve the Lord Christ, and find our opportunity of witnessing for Him, and of growing in His likeness.

The Kingdom of God, however, while established in this world, does not belong to it. It is essentially spiritual and eternal, and consists in righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. xiv. 17). In this supersensuous aspect of its being, accordingly, it has a special organ in the world—viz. the Christian Church. Through the Church the spiritual dominion of the Kingdom of God is verified to the consciences of men, and the claim of Christ upon men is maintained and vindicated. The Church, therefore, is a sphere of action, distinct from any of these we have formerly mentioned, but in full harmony with them. Living as members of families, in business and social

relations with our fellow-men, and as citizens of the State, we are, or may be, at the same time members of the Christian Church. Our activity therein will complete our labours in all other departments of life, and give to them guidance and inspiration.

The Christian Church is the crown and consummation of all the organic relations which link men together in moral and spiritual fellowship. Without the Christian Church, society would be in perpetual danger of falling back into the anarchy of mere selfishness. In the pages that follow let us consider briefly, first, the doctrine of the Church; second, our duties as Christians toward it.

I. **The Doctrine of the Church.**—1. Its Constitution and Membership.—The classical passage here is that which has been misinterpreted by the Papacy in so paltry and crass a manner (Mt. xvi. 17-19). Our Lord had before Him, if we may so speak, a great venture. He was to go to Jerusalem to die upon the Cross for the redemption of the world. If this great deed is not to be fruitless, there must be some institution provided by which the power of redemption shall be proclaimed and communicated to men. If He can secure such a basis, He will go forward. This He found in the company of men who believed on Him, whose convictions that day were uttered by the Apostle Peter. Here then is His Church in the initial

stage of its existence. This will be His instrument in the great task which is to occupy the whole dispensation of time. Here He will abide by His spirit, as the ever present Head and King of His people. The period of the earthly life of Jesus is a lovely picture of that which is enduring fact: Christ the Redeemer, present in the community of believing men and women, training, governing, and employing them, till this dispensation cease, and the Kingdom need no longer a Church to be its instrument, because it shall have fully come, and shall have been given up by its mediatorial Sovereign to God the Father.

The Church embraces all who acknowledge Christ as Redeemer and King. It is described in glowing language in the New Testament, the writers using every sacred and profound association to embody that which is divine and spiritual. The Church is a Temple (Ephes. ii. 19-21; 1 Peter ii. 5), a glorious fabric, in which Christ is at once the foundation and chief corner-stone, and of which the living stones are those who have been reconciled to God by the Cross. It grows in stately beauty throughout the ages, till at last the epoch arrives when the Church's work shall no more be needed, and the city of God be manifested, whereof he who saw it in vision says, "I saw no temple therein." The Church is the Bride of Christ, found by Him, poor, help-

less, sin-stained, and by Him purchased with His blood, cleansed from defilement, and robed in righteousness, till she begin to reflect the loveliness of her Head and Spouse (Ephes. v. 22, 32; Rev. xix. 7; xxi. 9). The Church is the Body of Christ, wherein the fulness of the unseen but Living One continually resides, all believing men and women being articulated into this divine organism, vitally united to the Head and to one another in a perfect fellowship (Col. i. 18).

To this Church belong certain glorious attributes. It is One; in the language of our Scottish Confession "one company and multitude of men, chosen of God, who rightly worship Him by true faith in Christ Jesus," whose unity is deeper than any division which pride can invent and folly perpetuate. It is Holy; "the communion not of profane persons, but of saints, who as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem have fruition of the most inestimable benefits, to wit, of one God, one Lord Jesus, one faith, one baptism," holy in the spirit of its life and in the example of multitudes of its lowliest members. It is Catholic, *i.e.* "universal, because it contains the elect of all ages, of all realms, nations and tongues, be they of the Jews or be they of the Gentiles, who have communion and society with God the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, through Sanctification of His Holy Spirit," Catholic with a breadth

that crosses the barriers of human misconception and dogmatism. It is Invisible, "known only to God, who alone knows whom He has chosen; and comprehends as well (as said is) the Elect that be departed, commonly called the Kirk Triumphant, and they that yet live and fight against Sin and Satan as shall live hereafter," and therefore not unreal or shadowy, but the most real of all institutions, in a world, which, with all its organizations, civilizations, policies, dynasties, nationalities, is destined to pass away, and be forgotten as a dream when one awaketh.

2. Its Purpose and Functions. Standing midway between the Kingdom of God with its divine powers and meanings, and the world of human life and interest where that Kingdom is to be established, the Church has a double function. It has to act toward God on behalf of humanity; and it has to act toward humanity on behalf of God. To this must be added a third function, viz. that of maintaining itself in life and efficiency. In other words, its function Godward is Worship; its function in reference to itself is Edification; its function manward is Witness. (*a*) Worship. This is the primary and fundamental function of the Church. God's revelation of Himself in Creation and Redemption awaits responsive adoration from the humanity He has made and saved. This response is made by the Christian Church

in its own name, as the company of the redeemed, and on behalf of humanity for whom God gave His Son. Man was meant to be the Priest of the material world, gathering into himself the meaning of creation, and uttering its praise in the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. Man has failed in this priestly task, has claimed creation for his own, and has uttered no other voice than that of pride and vainglory. The Church, therefore, is the Priest of this erring race, uttering in its stead the humiliation, repentance, surrender, and adoration, due from the sinful creature to the holy and merciful Creator. The central element in Church life, accordingly, the primary object of all Church assemblies, is common or public worship, which is the action of the whole priestly body. Such common worship has numerous secondary benefits to those who partake in it. These, however, do not constitute the reason of the act of worship. Worship, it cannot be too often repeated, is the first concern of the Church; beneficial results to the Church itself come as a reflex blessing upon the worshippers. The chief aim, however, and the dominant motive in the act of worship, must ever be to give glory to God. This would remain the duty of the Church, even were we to suppose, what is inconceivable, that no benefit should accrue to those discharging it. Without the Church the

world would be cursed by sin, unhallowed by devotion, with no holy place, no altar of sacrifice, no ministering priesthood.

(*b*) Edification. The life of the Church is essentially social. It flows from the Head through all the members, so that the vitality of one member is dependent on the health of the whole body. The life of the Church, therefore, must be maintained in vigour and purity. The Church must concern itself with its own spiritual life, not in any selfish spirit, but as the very condition of its efficiency. The worship of a dead Church would be blasphemy. The witness of a dead Church would be a lie. Edification is secured as a secondary, but immediately consequent, result of public worship. In worship, the common faith finds utterance, the common sacrifice is offered. The mere assemblage for that purpose stimulates faith, and leads to deeper sacrifice. There are assured, moreover, to assemblies held for this purpose most definite promises of blessing (Matt. xviii. 20; John xx. 19; 1 Cor. v. 4). The voice of the Church in worship is heard and answered in the dwelling-place of God. There is thus a quickening which can be experienced only when the Church is assembled in common worship. Edification ought, further, to be made a special object of the Church's activity. Means must be taken to secure that each member of the

organism is in living contact with the body, and is drawing in its share of the common life (Ephes. iv. 16; *cf.* Rom. i. 12). "Each of us," says Paul, "by the other's faith, both yours and mine," and so emphasizes the essential community of Christian experience. Beyond the stated assemblies of public worship, therefore, there must be frequent intercourse among the members of the Church upon the concerns of the higher life. The Scottish Church of an earlier period effectively provided for this want by its method of catechising. It cannot be said that in modern times we have secured any effective substitute for this now discarded method.

If the Church grew as naturally and perfectly as a plant, edification would be its sole concern. Sin, however, still operates within the Church. Evil habits tend to establish themselves within a professedly holy society. Scandals occur which are as running sores in the body. To edification, therefore, must be added discipline. In the New Testament, which consists largely of letters written to communities emerging out of the unspeakable corruption of heathen society, the subject of discipline receives special mention (1 Cor. v.; 2 Cor. ii.; Tit. iii. 10). Our Lord Himself legislated upon this subject (Matt. xiii. 24-30; xviii. 17). The Church is not called upon or entitled to determine by direct spiritual intuition, who are and who are

not vitally united to Christ. She is summoned, however, on pain of forfeiting the Spirit's indwelling, to deal with offences which openly contradict the profession which all her members make. She must practice self-purification as condition of self-preservation.

(*c*) Witness. The Church having turned to God in act of worship, now turns to the world in act of testimony. Let it be distinctly understood that the Church is not responsible directly for the redemption of the world. The glory of saving men redounds to Christ alone. The shame of rejecting Christ belongs to the individual will. Our Lord, however, has chosen His Church to be the medium of witness, and has determined to use the instrumentality of man in effecting His divine purpose. The Church is responsible for bearing witness to the grace of God. The Church's witness is the only expressly appointed, and ordinarily employed means of bringing mankind to the acknowledgment of God in Christ. The Church which neglects the function of witness falsifies its own profession of faith in Christ, and declares in effect that redemption is not the necessity of the race, and was not worth the purchase price of blood. The Church which fulfils this function grows by the witness it bears, becoming clearer in perception, deeper in conviction, more confirmed in faith.

The witness of the Church is borne chiefly in three forms. *The witness of public worship* (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25). The mere fact of assembly for such a purpose is demonstrative of faith, which cannot fail to be impressive. The spectacle of a Christian congregation engaged in the exercises of worship testifies that they are united by a common life and animated by a common hope. *The direct preaching of the Gospel* (Mark xvi. 15; Rom. x. 17, 18; Col. i. 23; Ephes. iii. 8-10). Redemption is emphatically a deed, the deed which the need of man required, accomplished by One competent to perform it. Hence to men, ignorant, in part, of the need, and wholly ignorant of the deed, it is necessary to proclaim both in their depth and completeness. The Church, let it be repeated, is not responsible for men's acceptance of the gospel; but she is responsible for its effective proclamation to "every creature." *The witness of life* (Phil. ii. 15, 16; Matt. v. 13, 14). Here is the larger sphere of witnessing bearing. Character and Conduct are the eloquent witness of the reality of the Sovereignty under which we profess to be. Lacking this supporting testimony, worship and preaching become worse than useless, and produce, not faith, but bitter unbelief.

3. The Branches of the Church.—The Church, as the representative and instrument of the kingdom of God in the earth, necessarily assumes an

organised form, and takes its place as a visible society among the other institutions of human activity. At once, therefore, we are confronted with the question of the notes of the true Church. When a society of professed believers claims to be the Church, or a Church, to what test shall we bring this claim?

The answer of the Reformers to this question may be given in the words of our Scottish Confession. "The notes, signs, and assured tokens whereby the immaculate spouse of Christ Jesus is known from the horrible harlot, the Kirk Malignant, we affirm, are neither Antiquity, Title usurped, lineal Descent, nor multitude of men approving one error. . . . The notes, therefore, of the true Kirk of God we believe, confess, and avow to be, first, the true preaching of the Word of God, into the which God has revealed Himself unto us, as the writings of the Prophets and Apostles do declare. Secondly, the right administration of the Sacraments of Christ Jesus, which must be annexed unto the word and promise of God, to seal and confirm the same in our hearts. Last, ecclesiastical discipline uprightly ministered, as God's word prescribes, whereby vice is repressed, and virtue nourished." That is to say, nothing that is of man, however venerable or imposing, constitutes any society, however great, wealthy, or powerful, a branch of the Holy Catholic Church.

But wherever, in any society, however small or obscure, these notes of the immediate presence and authority of Christ are to be found, there, without doubt, is the true Church of Christ.

It is to be noted that it cannot be established from the New Testament, that any particular form of government is intended to be regarded as a note of the true Church. Organisation there must be, together with officials possessed of special rights and duties. This is clearly recognised in the New Testament, and certain outstanding features are distinguished; *e.g.* Acts vii. 1-6; 1 Cor. xii. 28; Ephes. iv. 11, 12. But no scheme of offices is given, the presence of which shall constitute the Church, or the absence of which shall invalidate the claim of any denomination to be a branch of the Catholic Church. One negative regulation does stand forth in the whole New Testament treatment of the subject. Whatever form the organisation take, it must not stand between the believing people and Christ their Head. Whatever officers be appointed, they must never dare to assume the rights and privileges which belong to the whole company of believers. Sacerdotalism is anti-Christ. The Church is the communion of saints, "a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter ii. 5). Within the Church of God there is no room for

any other priesthood than that, into which every human being, coming to God through Jesus Christ, is thereby ordained.

As a mere form of government, therefore, there can be no objection to episcopacy, on the score of New Testament principles. If, however, there is in the New Testament no trace of diocesan episcopacy, if, historically, prelacy has proved a danger to the freedom of the children of God, and has been prone to ally itself with sacerdotal claims, there exist very sound reasons why we should reject such a system. Our claims for Presbyterianism is not that it is divinely prescribed, so that the true Church must necessarily be Presbyterian. We do claim for it, however, that it corresponds more nearly than any other form of government to the outline presented in the New Testament, and that, historically, it has been found admirably adapted to secure both order and liberty in the Christian Church.

The Church, as an organised body existing in any particular community or nation, necessarily comes into definite relations with the State. Into the relations between Church and State it is not necessary to enter further than to indicate the general lines of Christian conduct in reference to them. In general it is plain that the relation ought to be one of full harmony and hearty alliance. The State, aiming at the highest wel-

fare of the citizens, will find in the Church the most effective agent in the development of the national virtue, wherein the prosperity of the nation properly consists. The State ought, therefore, to give the Church amplest countenance and support. The Church, seeking to establish the Kingdom of God in the community, recognises the State to be the divinely instituted organ of right, which is one aspect of the divine Sovereignty. The Church, accordingly, honours and upholds the State, and yields to the State heartiest obedience in all civil matters. Such an alliance is the ideal relationship of Church and State. It needs no legal form of financial endowment to cement it. It will lose its moral force if it be stiffened into a political connection.

The Church, moreover, differs from all other spheres of interest within the community in owning a direct and immediate subjection to Christ its King. In all civil matters, it stands on the same platform with other institutions, and must obey the State, even should the State treat it harshly. In those sacred and spiritual affairs which are its proper concern, the Church stands apart from all other institutions and from the State itself, and owns allegiance to Christ alone, and can take its orders from none but Him. In such a matter as the summoning of its supreme court, the Church dare not wait on any human authority, and if the

State claim the right of interference the Church is bound to resist. "Take from us the liberty of assemblies," said Knox to Lethington, "and take from us the evangel." In so grave a spiritual matter as the appointment of ministers to preach, dispense the Sacraments, and take pastoral oversight of a congregation, the Church is bound to permit no authority to intervene between itself and Christ. The principle thus briefly indicated is that known as the spiritual independence of the Church. This does not mean that the Church is independent of all authority, or claims to have of itself a divine authority; but it does mean that the Church is wholly dependent upon, and is wholly bound by, the authority of Christ; and it does imply that the Church and its faithful members are bound, should the State seek to impose its authority contrary to the will of Christ, to decline obedience, even at risk of life itself.

II. **The duty of Christians toward the Church.** —1. Their preliminary duty is to unite with the Church by an act of public acknowledgment. In the case of those born within her pale, as the children of professed believers, Baptism has already expressed and sealed their relation to Christ and His Church. They are now, therefore, called upon to ratify the deed of Baptism by their own personal and voluntary act. The duty of Christians to belong to the Church of

Christ in one or other of its visible embodiments may be pressed from various points of view.

It is a duty we owe to Christ Himself. If we believe in Him, and are the recipients of inestimable benefits from His hand, it is our duty as honourable men, to enter the company which He has gathered round Himself. To be a disciple secretly is surely an unmanly thing. It will be found growingly irksome to maintain our position as unconfessed believers. Ultimately our faith will weaken to the point of extinction. Faith that saves is faith that makes confession (Rom. x. 9, 10). To stand aloof from the Church of Christ, criticised and assailed as she is in the world, is in effect to deny Christ before men. *It is a duty which we owe to ourselves.* To enter the Church is essential to the development of our Christian life. The Christian life is essentially social. The relation which binds us to Christ binds us to our fellow-believers. The life we have is one which we share with them, and can be retained only if we abide in fellowship with them. The privileges of grace are the property primarily of the Church, and secondarily of its members. Thus Calvin dwells with great emphasis on forgiveness as a permanent possession of the Church. "Let us surely hold that if we are admitted and engrafted into the body of the Church, the forgiveness of sins has been bestowed, and is daily bestowed on us, in divine liberality, through the intervention of Christ's

merits, and the sanctification of the Spirit. . . . In short, by the very arrangement of the Creed, we are reminded that forgiveness of sins always resides in the Church of Christ, for after the Church is, as it were, constituted, forgiveness of sins is subjoined." The realization of forgiveness, therefore, depends on membership in the Church. "Beyond the pale of the Church," says Calvin, "no forgiveness of sins, no salvation can be hoped for."[1] If this be true of our mere standing as Christians, much more is it true of our growth in grace. It can be secured only by our active membership in the Church. Isolation is weakness; ultimately death.

It is a duty which we owe to our fellow-Christians. The social relations of the Christian life are thoroughly reciprocal. We depend upon them for life and well-being; they in like manner depend upon us for certain elements in a full Christian experience. Each Christian has something to contribute to the common stock out of which all are nourished and grow strong. Something of knowledge, of spiritual power, of grace and virtue, belongs to each individual, which none but he can contribute to his brethren. To deny them this which he has, is to do them wrong, and is finally to forfeit that which he seemeth to have. The fundamental principle of the Christian life is "Freely ye have received, freely give." Imparta-

[1] "Institutes," B. IV., ch. i., 4, 21, 27.

tion is the security of possession. *It is a duty which we owe to the world.* The world waits to be redeemed. The Church is the divinely chosen instrument for executing the redemptive purpose of God. For a Christian to separate himself from the Church is to condemn himself to inefficiency. It implies, moreover, that he has a different opinion from Christ as to how His work is to be done in the world. As well might a private soldier separate himself from the commander and his army, and propose to attack the enemy according to his own private plan of campaign with his own puny resources.

There is a churchmanship which arrogates to itself the name of "high," but is, in reality, low and base. It vexes itself about "orders"; and mightily concerns itself with vestments and ritual. It is intensely proud and sectarian, and exhibits itself chiefly in unchurching all who will not submit to its claims. There is, however, a churchmanship which makes no claims for itself, but seeks only to carry out the will of Christ. It presents itself to the world in no pride of office, with no censorious criticism even of those who differ from it; but at the same time with a distinct testimony to what is the command of Christ laid upon all His servants. It acknowledges the virtues of those who remain "Christians unattached," but points out what they miss, and what danger they

are in. It acknowledges the good work done by societies which are not churches; but it declares they can never be substitutes for the Church, or do its work.

It laments the sins and failures of the Church, and throws itself upon Christ for their pardon and removal. But it cannot deny Christ, or dismiss His plan, to invent for itself some new form of association, some new kind of machinery. It reveres the Church as "the Mother of all the godly," and declares that "there is no other means of entering into life unless she conceive us in the womb and give us birth; unless she nourish us at her breast, and, in short, keep us under her charge and government, until, divested of mortal flesh, we become like the angels."[1]

2. Having become members of the Church, the duty of Christians is to enter with definite individual participation into the discharge of all the functions of the Church.

In the Christian Church all the members share equally in the privileges of the Church. Christianity "interposes no sacrificial tribe or class between God and man, by whose intervention alone God is reconciled and man forgiven. . . . For communicating instruction, and for preserving public order; for conducting religious worship, and for dispensing social charities, it became necessary

[1] "Institutes," B. IV., ch. i., 4.

to appoint special officers. But the priestly functions and privileges of the Christian people are never regarded as transferred, or even delegated to these officers. They are called stewards or messengers of God, servants or ministers of the Church, and the like; but the sacerdotal title is never once conferred upon them. The only priests under the Gospel, designated as such in the New Testament, are the saints, the members of the Christian brotherhood"[1] (1 Pet. ii. 5; Rev. i. 6; v. 10; xx. 6).

This great truth we must defend against any encroachment, however slight it may seem. It cannot be too well marked, however, that the highest defence of right is performance of duty. If the Christian people do not perform their priestly duties, they are in danger of losing their priestly rights, and having imposed upon them a sacerdotal caste.

The functions of the Church, accordingly, are to be performed by the members of the Church. Each member has individual responsibility in this matter, which he cannot shift to any other on any excuse whatever.

We are bound to bring to the work of the Church, first, ourselves, as we have already yielded ourselves to Christ (2 Cor. viii. 5); and then all gifts, capacities, means, and opportunities as God

[1] Lightfoot, essay on "The Christian Ministry," in his commentary on Philippians.

shall require them. The work of the Church we have already specified as mainly three-fold. In each department of it, therefore, we are to take direct part. (1) Worship. It is the duty of every member of the Church to take part in public worship. This duty may be presented in various aspects. *It is the service which God specially requires of us.* It is often urged that "Sunday is the only day I have. I work hard all the week. I am up late on Saturday. I am perfectly at liberty to use it for rest and recreation." Part of this contention we shall consider immediately. We deny that worship interferes with rest. The point we here insist on, however, is the duty of worshipping God. Is He to have no distinct place in our life? Are we never to make special acknowledgment of His being and goodness? Can we ignore Him without sin? The Church exists for worship. We claim membership and priestly office. How then can we absent ourselves from the altar of worship? Let it be well understood that the Church is not a lecture hall. It is a place where prayer is wont to be made. It cannot be urged as a duty binding on any soul to come and hear a man preach. It is certain that we can read in books better sermons than we shall ever hear. This, however, has nothing to do with the duty of worship. That remains whether the sermon be excellent or poor. It is sin to neglect it.

It is, moreover, *necessary to us as means of self-culture.* Sunday is ours; made for us, not we for it. Let us never commit the tactical error of defending a spiritual duty on legal grounds. The Sabbath rest is not a tax exacted by a jealous God, who grudges our liberty. It is a gift generously bestowed by a loving Father, who knows what His children need, and desires their welfare. The practical question is, How are we to use the gift? The answer to this depends on the view we take of human nature. If we regard it as wholly material, or limited to things seen and temporal, we shall certainly be quite right to use the Sunday for mere self-indulgence, for pleasures, whether grosser or more refined. If, however, we recognise that human nature has affinities with the unseen and eternal, and reaches its full perfection only when its capacity for communion with God is exercised, such a method of spending Sunday will be seen to be beneath our dignity as men. Worship is the only means whereby we can truly give rest, and, in the literal sense of the word, recreation, to the soul of man.

It is also *a service we render to the community at large.* It may be true that we as individuals might spend a profitable day by our study fire or in the open fields, in solitary communion with God. We ought, however, to consider how this conduct will affect society round us. If we sur-

render the sanctity of the day of rest, shall we have served or injured our fellow-men? What would the introduction among us of a "continental Sunday" be to our working classes—loss or gain? If we believe that men are made for God, and not for the perishing world, we must answer loss, infinite loss. To allow ourselves to neglect worship, to surrender the unique character of the day of rest, on the ground that we ourselves can spend it profitably alone, is grossest selfishness. Making journeys in trains, cycling, visiting, etc., on Sunday might not do us as individuals harm, and are not to be condemned as breach of any legal precept. But for Christians they are breach of the law of love. The ground on which we are to defend the observance of a public day of rest is the need of man. The spirit in which we are to urge it is not Pharisaic legalism but Christlike compassion.

(2) Edification. In the vitality of the Church each member has a personal interest, for upon the fulness of the Church's life depends the health and vigour of his own. It is a duty, therefore, to himself as well as to the brotherhood to seek the spiritual welfare of all. The members are bound to cultivate the spirit of brotherhood among themselves. The law of love is to be fulfilled in concentrated and typical form among the members of the Christian Society (Gal. vi. 10; 1 Pet. ii.

17). No Church can be strong or efficient whose members are cold and indifferent to one another, and omit the exercises of homely human kindness. Divisions of class or caste are an abomination in the household of faith. It is useless praying for blessing where these are permitted to exist. Mutual kindness, sympathy and friendliness form the often-neglected presupposition of spiritual blessing. The duties of forbearance and forgiveness in like manner gain peculiar urgency, as they are binding upon members of the Church. It cannot be too solemnly urged that no gift is accepted on the altar while we have a bad conscience toward our brother (Matt. v. 23). High spirituality, fervency in prayer, zeal for conversions, abundance of gifts, are no substitute for meekness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Edification begins, therefore, in the commonplace virtues of ordinary social relations.

Beyond this lies the whole field of more direct spiritual influence. It is the duty of members of the Church to make use of the means of grace, not merely for their own private benefit, but for the benefit of the whole Church. Every Christian absenting himself causelessly from the worship of the Church is injuring his fellow-members. It is a duty, not merely to attend stated assemblies of the Church, as at so-called canonical hours, but also to cultivate spiritual fellowship

by all means open to us. Such means must be left to the discretion of individual communities, and to the guidance that lies in circumstances. There can be no doubt, however, that the common life of the Church requires special modes of expression, and will be apt to decay when these are denied to it. It is part of our work for Christ and the Church to devise and support such means of close spiritual intercourse.

Discipline is, as we have noticed, part of edification. Here the individual member has a great duty. On the one hand, he must so conduct his relations toward an offending brother, that the case may not come before the Church for discipline (Matt. xviii. 15-17). On the other hand, when discipline has to be exercised he must give the Church the support of his approval. Discipline depends on the moral standard of the Church. Where that is low, discipline is ineffective. There are sins prevalent in Scotland, which discipline has proved ineffective to reduce, because the conscience of Christian people has not been roused to a sufficient sense of their shame. The duty of elevating the tone of public opinion, which we noted as binding on the citizen of the State, is still more obligatory on the member of the Church. We are so to live, and think, and speak, that it shall be impossible for such offences to survive within the Christian Church.

(3) Witness. This is the great task of the Church toward the world. Since the Church is not a set of officials, but the whole communion of saints, this task belongs to each individual within the Church. The duty of the Christian is not exhausted when he has come to God to receive the "unspeakable gift" at His hand. Properly speaking it has only then begun. The duty of witness rules the whole Christian life. By attendance at public worship, by direct testimony of speech, and by the commentary and illustration of character, we are bound to witness for Christ. In the propagation of the Gospel throughout the world, our profession of Christianity gives us a vested interest, and ought to awaken in us a constant and generous enthusiasm, "for the love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. v. 14). The missionary enterprise of the Church at home and abroad has been pursued throughout this century with renewed interest and with marked success. Yet it has to be confessed that those who are taking a direct concern in the spread of the Gospel bear even yet but a small proportion to the membership of the visible Church. The inference to be drawn is that, if so much has been accomplished by resources so small, much more may be confidently expected when each member of the Church shall realise that the missionary obligation is not the fancy of a few eccentric enthusiasts, but the immediate concern of each

individual who is receiving in his own person the benefits of redemption.

The work of the Church in the discharge of its functions of worship, edification, and witness, is very varied, and requires all the resources of effort, Christian liberality, and prayer, which her members can contribute. The work is hard, and makes constant demands for self-denial and self-sacrifice. The Church will be false to her calling if she allows her members to sit idle and unrebuked in the enjoyment of privilege. She must call her members in her Master's name out of their ease and self-indulgence, to take part in the redemption of the world. If, however, the work be hard, its reward is high. It affords to all engaged in it a splendid discipline of character, and a rich opportunity for increase in all the graces of the Christian life. It corrects the deadening and narrowing influence of secular business. It opens up a world of fresh and vivid human interests. It teaches us the pathos and tragedy of human life. It is an education in sympathy, benevolence, compassion, and the love of humanity. It trains us to know human nature, in the persons of others, and thus helps us to know and govern ourselves. Above all, in its magnitude, it teaches us humility, and leads us out of ourselves into the fellowship of God. It is thus the noblest of all the means of grace; and those who use it most worthily are not conscious of

conferring favours on the Church or the world, since in all their service for love of God and man, they are themselves the greatest recipients.[1]

[1] "Counsels to a Church Member," published by the Publications Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, is a good statement of the duties of Christians in the Church.—The Edinburgh Press, 9 and 11 Young Street, Edinburgh.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

WE have thus traced the life of a Christian through the various spheres of action in which he is called on to play his part—the Family, the Business of Life, Social Relations, the State, and the Church. It remains to remark that within all human life, and beneath all its visible manifestations, is God, Who is Spirit. He is present in all the affairs of life. He touches us on every side of our nature. We cannot escape from Him; and those who know Him have Him ever with them. All the actions of Christian life are performed before Him. He is the object of all Christian service. The duties of the Christian, therefore, could not be enumerated in any account, however complete and detailed; for they are all the consequences of this fundamental and all comprehensive duty of love to God. Love to God indeed, is scarcely to be called a duty. Rather is it the power of God's love to us, arising within the heart of the redeemed as a pure fountain of energy.

When we speak of love to God, accordingly, we have risen to the point where religion and

morality blend together. We have reached the deepest point of human experience, out of which emerge all the issues of duty and enjoyment. Love to God is not one passion among many. It is the answer of man to Him who first loved us; and it embraces the whole personality in every aspect of its complex constitution, with all its gifts and energies (Mark xii. 30). Love to God spreads through life as the motive power of all action and all behaviour.

It is summed up in three great exercises of soul. *Consecration*; the surrender of will to the will of the All-just and the All-good (Rom. vi. 13; xii. 1; Matt. vi. 24; 1 Cor. x. 31). Bishop Butler, who has been described as a mystic fallen on evil days, devotes two of his great sermons to this theme, and thus concludes: "Our resignation to the will of God may be said to be perfect, when our will is lost and resolved up into His, when we rest in His will as our end, as being itself most just, and right, and good." This may be mysticism; but it is also practical Christianity. *Committal*; the entrusting of the life to the love of God. This is the privilege of a surrendered soul, to rest in perfect confidence, and enjoy perfect peace. See the sequence of the 3rd and 4th petitions of the Lord's Prayer; and note the beautiful order of faith—first, the will of God supreme; second,

the welfare of man secure. Our Lord's description of trust reads like a dream, and is meant to be a reality (Matt. vi. 25-34; Luke xii. 22-34); and is realised in the experience and counsels of his disciples; (Phil. i. 20; iv. 11-13; Heb. xiii. 5, 6). *Communion*; the entrance of the spirit of man into immediate intercourse with the Father, through the mediation of the Son (Heb. x. 19-22). Here at the point where the separateness of our life is raised to the point of union, we have passed beyond morality (John xvii. 11, 21, 22; Ephes. iii. 14-21). When the last hindrances of space and time shall be removed, morality, in any sense in which it can be distinguished from religion, will cease to be, and the service of earth, at its best so feeble and imperfect, will be exchanged for the service of heaven, with its unknown ministries of glory and joy.

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